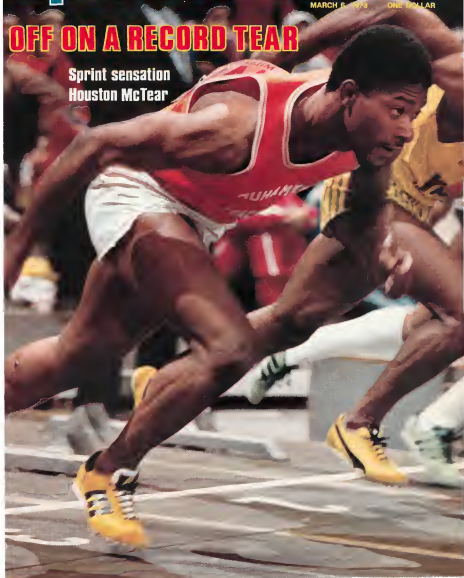


Sports Illustrated

MARCH 6, 1978 ONE DOLLAR

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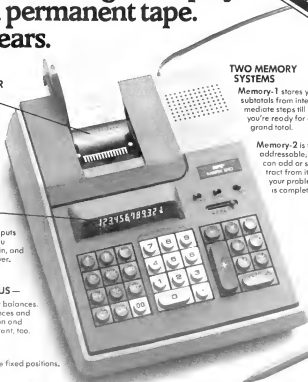
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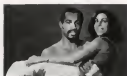
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LETTER FROM THE PUBLISHER



LAURIE AND BOXER KEN NORTON



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PHOTOGRAPHER JOHN IACONO



PHOTOGRAPHER HEINZ KLUETMEIER



BOXER DUANE BOBICK

About a year ago, Laurel Frankel of our picture department was in the studio while Duane Bobick was being photographed before the Ken Norton fight. During a lull, Bobick scooped up Laurie and posed. That's how it all started. Since then, all kinds of people have been picking Laurie up, and the wall of her office is now covered with pictures like these. Every girl needs a hobby. Last December Olympic weight-lifting champion Vasily Alexeyev unexpectedly visited our office and Laurie was on the verge of a genuine coup. She searched frantically—not a photographer in sight. Well, you can't win 'em all.



PHOTO ASSISTANT ANTHONY DONNA

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Next Week

IT'S TOURNAMENT TIME in college basketball. First come the league playoffs, the best of them the ACC, which any of four teams could win, and the Metro 7, in which surprising Florida State is the favorite. Kent Harrison and Joe Jares report.

ONE MINUTE THEY'RE UP, the next minute they're down on all fours, barking with the agonies of lower back pain. It is a common complaint, and J.D. Reed, whose back is as bad as anybody's, tells how sufferers can get back on their feet.

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SCORECARD

Edited by ROBERT H. BOYLE

DOOF!

John B. Connally, the former Secretary of the Treasury, a potential candidate for the Republican presidential nomination in 1980 and a man touted for his fund of knowledge, has been lecturing at colleges across the country. While at the University of Pittsburgh recently, Connally was being escorted around the campus when he suddenly saw Pitt Stadium and exclaimed, "The Pitt Panthers' Joe Paterno!"

As columnist Roy McHugh of the *Pittsburgh Press* says, "There are gaps, quite obviously, in his knowledge of football."

POLITICIANS AND BOXING

A couple of governors, Milton Shapp of Pennsylvania and Hugh Carey of New York, have some explaining to do.

Shapp will be facing a potentially explosive situation if the state athletic commission, whose members serve at his pleasure, grants a manager's license to Frank (Blinky) Palermo, one of the most vicious hoods ever to have disgraced any sport. Former promoter Jackie Leonard, who was badly beaten in 1959 after he testified against Palermo and his cronies, Frankie Carbo, last week recounted in SCORECARD how he still lived in fear of Palermo, despite the passage of years. Now Tom Cushman of the *Philadelphia Daily News* says he knows several people who have information about Blinky but are scared stiff about even having their names get out. "This reinforces the point as dramatically as anything I can say," says Cushman. "Palermo is simply something that boxing can't tolerate."

Instead of wasting time considering whether or not Palermo should get a license—of course he shouldn't—the commission should be trying to ascertain whether Blinky is indeed the undercover manager of Jimmy Young, the heavyweight contender, as has been the talk for months. But any mention of Jimmy Young's name might make the commission chairman, Howard McCall, twitchy.

Last year McCall attended the Young-George Foreman fight in San Juan, Puerto Rico, plane tickets courtesy of promoter Don King. Governor Shapp might want to ask McCall about that.

In New York, Governor Carey, who took a sanctimonious stance when he learned that his commission chairman, James Farley Jr., had also been serving as chairman of King's scandal-ridden U.S. Championship Boxing Tournament, has now appointed a new chairman. He is Jack Prenderville, who has no qualifications whatever for this important position other than that he is a crony of Carey's and once ran his congressional office in Brooklyn. Prenderville says he was a fight fan years ago but that he really knows more about basketball. He coached basketball at St. Francis (N.Y.) College for two years, and his overall record was 19 and 32.

DEEP BOLT

When a 12-foot-long, 300-pound bottlenose dolphin known as "Mr. Spock" swallowed a pointed three-inch bolt that a worker had accidentally dropped in his tank at Marine World/Africa USA, south of San Francisco last week, it looked like curtains for the dolphin. Veterinarian technician Ron Swallow (no kidding) tried to extricate the bolt from the first of Mr. Spock's three stomachs, but his arm was too short. The dolphin was taken to Peninsula Hospital, where a \$5,000 piece of equipment known as a fiber optic scope couldn't get at the bolt either. Attendants ruled out surgery because recovery was doubtful.

Marine World President Mike Demetrius said, "What we need is a pro basketball player with a long reach. Too bad the Warriors are out of town."

Up spoke Mary O'Herron, his PR director and a Warrior fan, "Clifford Ray's home with a bad leg."

Ray was found and agreed to give it a try. He has a 45-inch reach, but the attendants were concerned he wouldn't be able to get his 16-inch biceps down Mr.

Spock's throat. Ray's arm was lubricated, he was told to "just go with the flow," and he reached deep down inside. He could keep his arm inside the dolphin for only three minutes, lest Mr. Spock stop breathing. With 30 seconds to go on the clock, Ray found the bolt and shouted, "Got it!" With five seconds to spare, he withdrew the bolt. Call it *Androcles and the Dolphin*.

ARE YOU LISTENING OUT THERE?

The Atlanta Radio Club is organizing more than 5,000 ham operators in the area and one million throughout the world to extend an invitation to a spaceship from another planet to land in Atlanta-Fulton County Stadium just before the Braves' home opener. For three weeks leading up to the April 7 night



game against the Dodgers, ham operators are being asked to broadcast the following message:

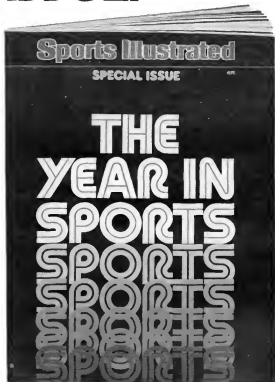
"Living beings who travel throughout the universe from planets other than earth are invited to make a peaceful landing on earth at 1920 hours Eastern Standard Time on April 7, 1978. The location for this landing should be Atlanta, Georgia of the United States of America, at the Atlanta Stadium, latitude 85° 25 minutes west, longitude 33° 44 minutes north."

The pregame ceremonies will be stopped at 7:20 p.m. to await the landing. Carl Nichols, a spokesman for the Atlanta Radio Club, says, "If there are any intelligent beings traveling through outer space, there should be no way they

continued

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won't pick up the message." A vice-president of the Braves, whose name is Bob Hope, says, "I honestly don't think a spaceship will land. But if one does, it will certainly be one of the biggest events in the history of baseball."

WRONG MODEL

Richard Perry, athletic director at the University of Southern California, intends to "go to war" against the U.S. Volleyball Association. He made that decision last week when seven of the eight players on USC's national championship women's volleyball team dropped out of school. They want to be in the 1980 Olympics, and the USVBA, which wants a competitive team, decided that anyone who hopes to play in Moscow has to start year-round training in Colorado Springs March 1. The USC coach, Chuck Erbe, also left to become an assistant coach of the Olympic team, but it's the departure of the students that really disturbs Perry. He says, "They'll take these kids out of universities and use them up for three or six or eight years, then leave them without any alternatives. That's not right."

Perry has no doubt that the USVBA training program will be successful. "The team will be better in 1980 than it would have been. Then after 1980, maybe men's volleyball will do the same thing. And our water-polo team will say, 'We haven't beaten Poland in 100 years. Let's take all the kids out of school and concentrate on water polo.' Gymnastics could say the same thing. And we'll end up emulating the East German or Polish model."

"That model is fine for East Germany and for Poland. But is it fine for the United States? My opinion is no. Our model is to develop kids to be fine athletes and to prepare them to be contributing citizens."

CHEERS

Every time Nelson Burton, the hard-hitting left wing for Hershey of the American Hockey League, came on the ice or acted threateningly toward a Springfield player, a bunch of fans in Hershey Park Arena cheered wildly and waved signs. When Burton was sent to the penalty box for fighting, they went bananas. Burton did not know who the fans were, but then they sent him a note, explaining that they were Junetta College students taking a course in behavioral analysis and had

chosen to cheer for him as part of an experiment.

"We didn't know that much about the Hershey players, so we selected one at random and it was Nelson Burton," says Professor Charles Wise. "What we were trying to do was influence his performance on the ice, trying to urge him on to possibly perform better than he might otherwise. We were hoping to get some kind of a reaction. We weren't trying to encourage him to get into a brawl, but I have to admit it certainly excited the class when he did."

Burton isn't the first athlete to have attracted the attention of the class. Wise once took his students to a Pittsburgh Pirate doubleheader where they started cheering like crazy for Rightfielder Dave Parker. "It became contagious," says Wise, "and after a while just about everybody sitting along the first-base side was cheering Parker. We couldn't conclude that what we did had any effect, but Parker was the batting and defensive star of both games that day. It made the class feel pretty good."

BASS BAN

The striped bass, the glamorous inshore gamefish of the East Coast and a valuable commercial species, has been taking its lumps of late. Pollution has virtually wiped out spawning in the Delaware River, chemical contamination and power plants have taken their toll of Hudson River fish and the Chesapeake Bay system hasn't had a good hatch, or what biologists call "a dominant year-class," since 1970.

"Basically, we're fishing on 1970 fish and older right now," says Ben Florence of the Maryland Fisheries Administration, "and since 1970 we've had mediocre production and just can't sustain the levels we're used to. A pretty good handle is our commercial harvest in Chesapeake Bay. We take approximately half of the commercial harvest on the whole East Coast. In 1973 we harvested approximately five million pounds of striped bass. In 1977 the harvest dropped to one million pounds, 20% of 1973's. It's been a straight-line drop."

In an effort to boost the striped population, the Maryland Department of Natural Resources has proposed a ban on all commercial fishing this spring in spawning rivers and part of the bay itself. Warren K. Rich, assistant attorney general for the department, says the ban

on spring fishing is "a very preliminary step in a national effort that Maryland is going to try to spearhead to conserve striped bass. It may have a significant impact, but to have a major effect we are going to need other states' cooperation," because stripers migrate from the Chesapeake after spawning.

Lefty Kreh, the perceptive outdoors writer for *The Baltimore Sun*, says, "No one denies that the Chesapeake Bay has declined in water quality. Few will deny, too, that we have a serious striped-bass problem. What is done in the next five years may determine for all time what happens to the striped on the Atlantic Coast."

TIED TO BE FIT

Time was passing slowly on Noah's ark, so the lion suggested to the giraffe that they choose up sides for a football game. The giraffe agreed. The lion's team kicked off, and on the first play from scrimmage the monkey handed off to the rhino, who charged up the middle for 10 yards. On the next play the rhino rambled all the way for a touchdown. At halftime the giraffe's team was leading 42-0.

Early in the second half the monkey again handed off to the rhino. The rhino headed for a hole in the line, but the centipede, who was playing defensive tackle, reared up, grabbed the rhino and threw him to the deck, causing a fumble. The rabbit, who was playing free safety, picked up the ball and scored for the lion's team. The lion was elated. "Fantastic tackle!" he exclaimed to the centipede. "Just fantastic! By the way, where were you in the first half?" The centipede replied, "I was lacing up my shoes."

BEERING THE LIGHT

Inquiries in three races and a broken saddle in another delayed the day's program at the Fair Grounds in New Orleans to such an extent that the sun was setting before post time for the last race. This situation was not lost on hunch players who bet on a long shot named Plum Dark to win. He paid \$25 40.

THEY SAID IT

• Susan Hemond, 18-year-old daughter of White Sox General Manager Roland Hemond, asked if her winning time of 5:29 in the mile in a track meet at Pasadena City College was her best one. "It's my only one."

END

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Sports Illustrated

MARCH 8, 1978

ICEMAN COMETH AND SCORETH

*San Antonio's Spurs are burning up the NBA Centre/
and the main reason is ultra-cool Guard George Gervin*

by **CURRY KIRKPATRICK**





Doing his number—My guy is zigzaggin'—the 6' 8" Gervin slides and glides through the Hawks

Marty, the motorcycle cop, unholsters this 41 Smith & Wesson and sets it down on the bench so he can play one-on-one. Bowie, the golden Labrador retriever, makes a puddle in the center circle. George, the star player, wears suede moccasins, bites into an orange and heaves the ball dead into the basket from a concrete walkway. Doug, the coach, itches to leave "this incredible hysteria of practice" so he can make his starting time on the first tee. Is this any way to run a contender? Well, circle the wagons, boys, here come the San Antonio Spurs.

Besides being the surprising runaway leader in the NBA's Central Division and the not so surprising quintessential representative of the old ABA, if the San Antonio Spurs are not the most outlandish, disorganized, laid-back and down-to-the-rootsiest fun team to watch in the whole wide universe, then Speedy Gonzales will eat his sombrero right there in the middle of the Baseline Bums cheering section.

That is a distinct possibility on practically every night that George (The Ice-man) Gervin, Larry (Special K) Kenon, Billy (Big Whopper) Paultz and Mike (Philly Dog) Gale, among the other amazing Spurs you have not seen on television this ratings period, begin their frenzied—or is it studied?—attack on the hallowed traditions of the pro game. Rebounding and defense, the two stone pillars upon which successful franchises are thought to be constructed, are mere bagatelles in San Antonio. Which is to say the Spurs seldom remember to catch anything that misses or guard anything that moves. Scouting and a solid college draft are virtually ignored—only one man (Forward Mark Olberding) remains from the club's 11 years of drafting.

In addition, the Spurs are tall but not strong. They are quick but not fast. They have a converted center at forward, a converted forward at backup center and another converted forward at guard. The Spurs live off free agents and waiver-clearers and traded-aways, many of

continued

whom make enough mindless errors to send their coach, Doug Moe, wailing all the way to the golf course, not to mention to the dogs. (Moe co-owns a pair of greyhounds with Denver Nugget Coach Larry Brown.) Yet when this fascinating conglomeration of heads-down operators is running and gunning, which it usually is; when the Spurs are leading the league in scoring as well as shooting from both the field and the foul line, which they usually are; when they are scattering around like illegal aliens on a jalapeño hunt and filling the nets and the seats and stunning everybody with their passing and ball movement and irrepressible, Remember-the-Alamo-by-damn hustle, there is no team in basketball more dangerous to play against. As Gervin says, "Whereas the Spurs' gig is havin' fun, otherwise the Spurs be comin' atcha."

You figure it out.

As the Iceman cometh, of course, the Spurs goeth. Having struggled early in the season, San Antonio suddenly won 18 of 22 games as Gervin shot 63% from mostly way out and way overhead. The streak began when skinny, sometime Forward Mike Green, who was acquired from Seattle in November, was installed at backup center, which enabled 6'11" Coby Dietrick to move into the starting lineup at forward. The Spurs' resurgence propelled them into first place by a margin that had grown to 6½ games at the end of last week. In one stretch, they put together an 11-out-of-12 win streak, the last game of which will live in the hearts of Texans forever. The Spurs were losing to the Golden State Warriors by 13 points at the conclusion of three quarters in Oakland and Gervin had been held to nine points. In the fourth period, however, the Iceman made 10 of 12 shots and scored 23 points, including the basket that sent the game into overtime. Ice then scored five more points and the Spurs won 131-122. In the locker room all the upstart visitors could do was laugh and laugh.

Gervin has not confined his escapades to the West Coast. In New York he connected on 14 of 20 and scored 35 points. In Kansas City he made 19 of 25 and finished with 42. Then to show the home folks what he could do, Ice threw 17 for 18 (37 total points) all over the Chicago Bulls' bewildered heads. Run that by again? Seventeen for 18. One miss. One. Moe took him out for the whole last quarter. Was Ice hot about that? "Naw, man,"

Gervin says. "Whereas I ain't hungry, whereas it was a once-in-a-lifetime thing otherwise Ice be cool."

Despite such dazzling statistics and All-Star Game appearances in both his years in the NBA, George Gervin still is the most unknown great player in basketball. This has a little to do with a lot of things, including Gervin's ABA pedigree, a relaxed, low-profile manner and playing in a pleasant, unpretentious, outskirts-of-the-media town like San Antonio.

In contrast to its outrageous daily yellow journals—WINE JUG THUG IN SIXTH HI-JACK, TWO TONS BLAZING DEATH, scream the headlines—owned by Australian press lord Rupert Murdoch, San Antonio appears to take its heroes in stride. Even though pro basketball is the only real game in town, the suspicion lingers that the local gentry would more readily recognize another Australian in their midst—John Newcombe, who spends half the year at his tennis ranch down the road—than they would Iceman Gervin.

"Whereas I never went fly like some of the boys," says Gervin. "I'm conservative. I got the short hair, the pencil 'stache, the simple clothes. Plus I'm 6'8", 183—no, make that 185—and when you look at me all you see is bone. Otherwise in Detroit I'm known as Twig according to my physique. I just do my thing and stay consistent. I figure the people be recognizing the Iceman pretty soon now. Whereas I be up there in a minute."

In an attempt to run something up the flagpole, local publicity merchants had the felicitous idea of nicknaming Gervin's 18-month-old son, George Jr., Ice Cube and—are you ready for this?—a still-to-be-born child Icele. Though this gimmick produced some national ink, at home it didn't wash. "I lay back and keep hearing 'Cube, Cube,' but my boy is just G Junior to me," says Gervin, "whereas although if the new baby is a girl, I may have to call her Snowflake."

Out of a broken home in the ghetto of Detroit's east side, Gervin made "all E's" in high school and then went off to spend a few hours at Long Beach State under Jerry Tarkanian, before transferring to Eastern Michigan, where he led the Hurons to the NCAA college tournament in Evansville and concluded his college career with a one-punch knockout of Jay Piccola of Roanoke College. "Whereas

the cut bowled me, so I got up fast and he went down faster. Boom. TKO," explains Ice, laughing. But back then the incident resulted in EMU Coach Jim Dutcher announcing that he would quit the profession (he is now at Minnesota) and Gervin dropping out of school.

The Iceman traces his path to the NBA this way: "I played with the semipro Pontiac Caperals in Pontiac, Mich., for seven months until I was discovered by the great Johnny, Red, Kerr—Yeah—who signed me for the Virginia Squires where my pro career was begun and where I played with the great Julius, Doctor J, Erving, for a year and then was traded to San Antonio which I didn't know what it was. I remember the Caperals like it was yesterday because I was with the old vets, copin'. Yeah. And I was thrivin' on that. Uh-huh."

Being a contemporary and onetime teammate of Dr. J as well as having similar abilities (Gervin lacks only Erving's strength), the Iceman has suffered the inevitable comparisons. There was the famous ABA dunk contest that Erving won while Gervin was missing three of five slammer, including his unique "afterthought dunk" wherein Ice glides by the rim one way while reaching back and—boing—somahawking the ball the other. "The afterthought be tough, yeah," says Ice. Then there was the bitter 1976 ABA playoff series won by Erving's New York Nets over Gervin's Spurs, 4 games to 3.

But in the 1½ seasons since Moe switched Gervin to the backcourt (to recover the scoring lost when Guard James Silas injured his knee), the Iceman has proved, says teammate Paultz, that "he can do some things not even the Doc can do."

Last season, while adjusting to his new position, Gervin shot 54% (fourth best in the NBA) and scored 23 points a game (ninth best), but he took too many bad shots and made too many offensive fouls while being frustrated by the terrible physical pounding he experienced every night. In the playoffs the Celtics' Charlie Scott chopped up Gervin unmercifully. This year the Iceman has cut down on his fouls and his preposterous prayer shots. He is scoring 27 a game (second only to Pete Maravich), shooting 55%, seeing the floor better, passing more and even playing occasional one-man zone defense on high.

Now in the crunch Moe holds up four

fingers. The Spurs have so consistently mastered their 1-4 alignment—an offense developed for Silas but now the property of Gervin, who does a passable impression of Roger Staubach fading back into the shotgun—that cynics say the coach could cut off his thumb and still direct the entire San Antonio playbook.

As his moniker implies, Gervin does all this marvelous stuff while appearing to be in a deep coma—face expressionless, eyelids drooping, the Iceman to the letter. "Make him work, he's not even working," Atlanta Hawk Coach Hubie Brown yelled at the referees the other night when Gervin received the benefit of a disputable foul call. But that is precisely Gervin's gig. It is difficult to distinguish between when he is pushing hard and when he is sleeping on the job, so smooth and graceful are his movements, so complete his insouciance. Gervin's explosive first step to the bucket and gliding style also nicely cover up another secret: Ice may be one of the slowest runners in the NBA.

"Whereas I ain't too fast, here to there," Gervin says, "my gig is zigzaggin'."

"To stop Ice you beat Ice up," says Spur Guard George Karl. "That worked in the past. But now he knows he's going to get slapped and bumped every time he goes for the shot, so it doesn't bother him. Norm Van Lier roughed him up so bad the last couple of times that Ice went for twin 37s against the Bulls. It's a joke. The man is just toying with the whole NBA."

The Spurs' inaugural season in the NBA was highlighted by some fairly ridiculous inconsistencies; the team did things like whip the 76ers three out of four and lose four straight to Atlanta. Then, too, it was known around the league that the new boys from the old ABA would be intimidated and that if you got them down they weren't likely to come back.

All of that seemed in the Dark Ages last week when the Spurs proved how tough an opponent they have become—even when their Iceman is a-melting.

In a 118-114 overtime defeat by Portland and a 118-105 victory over Atlanta, Gervin fell into a shooting slump and missed 25 of 41 shots while receiving his standard double- and triple-teaming. Against Portland, San Antonio dropped behind by as many as 15 points in the



Special K Kenon, the Spurs' second-leading scorer behind Gervin, leaves Tree Rollins clutching air.

first half and 12 in the second—formerly the club's point of no return—only to come roaring back to tie the contest and gain possession of the ball with 25 seconds left.

"I consider the game won when Ice has his hands on the ball in that situation," says Paulitz. But, working from the 1-4 against Corky Calhoun, Gervin backed and sidled and slid to 23 feet, let the ball go too soon and missed the shot that would have meant San Antonio's second straight licking of the world champions.

Two nights later the Spurs were jingling and jangling when the ghost of James Silas past—who when healthy was the finest backcourt man in the ABA—appeared and scored 15 points in 17 minutes while his teammates were blocking 12 shots in the rout of the Hawks. The Spurs closed out the week by blowing a 24-point lead over Cleveland before Gervin threw in two late slingshot jumpers and two free throws to preserve a 112-108 victory. En route, the Iceman ended his shooting famine by converting 14 of 23 shots and scoring 36 points on a variety of spins and twists that needed to be seen to be appreciated.

This is not so easy.

CBS, which showcased the Spurs no less than eight times last season, has not televised a single San Antonio contest this winter, though one will be aired this Sunday. But with the rejuvenated Silas and the elegant Gervin providing fire and ice, with Kenon having another monster season (the former Net forward is averaging 20 points a game); with a maniacal offensive bench consisting of shooters like Allan Bristow, Lou Dampier and Green; and with Moe trying desperately to concentrate while his greyhound Blockwork runs him into the next tax bracket, the Spurs surely must be at least as attractive a television concept as strong men carrying refrigerators around on their backs.

Last week, in a wide-ranging interview that consumed at least 15 seconds, Gervin explained the phenomenon in Texas. "Now regardless of where this team is gon' sometimes," he said, "whereas we can go anywhere and play the same gig and, otherwise, win most of the places. Yeah."

Which is the Iceman's way of announcing that otherwise the San Antonio Spurs be comin' atcha. Uh-huh. **DB**



Captain Yan Cournoyer and his streaking Canadiens encountered little resistance from rival goaltenders until they met up with the Rangers' Hardy Astrom

MONTREAL WAS HALE UNTIL HARDY

On any given Saturday night any given NHL team, even the lowly New York Rangers, can thrust a nerveless Swede into the nets for his first game and put an end to the Canadiens' record 28-game unbeaten string by **JERRY KIRSHENBAUM**

A funny thing happened to the Montreal Canadiens last Saturday night in the Forum. They lost. Just when it was starting to look as though the Canadiens might never again lose anything, even their tempers, the New York Rangers beat them 6-3. That snapped Montreal's record unbeaten string at 28 games. However, the Canadiens' streak, which demolished the previous NHL record of 23, was probably no more remarkable than the fact that it was New York, of all teams, that ended it.

The Rangers are mired in the Patrick Division cellar, had not won in the Forum in six years and—no doubt figuring they had nothing to lose—picked the Montreal game to unveil 26-year-old Swedish import Hardy Astrom, who had never played in an NHL game, as their starting goaltender. Astrom had been called up from the New Haven Night-hawks 24 hours earlier, and Ranger

Coach Jean-Guy Talbot decided to start him because "when you go to Montreal you'll try anything." That hardly sounded like a ringing vote of confidence but Astrom performed solidly in the nets, and the Rangers checked with unaccustomed fervor. Astrom took the win calmly, as befits a fellow who, as goaltender for the Swedish national team, had beaten the Czechs in Prague and the Russians in Moscow. "I know the Forum is special," he shrugged, "but to me it would have been no different if we were playing in Atlanta."

Before the game against the Rangers, one had to go back 10 weeks—to successive road losses to Minnesota (3-2) on Dec. 14 and to Pittsburgh (5-3) on Dec. 17—to find the last times the Canadiens had been defeated. Although Coach Scotty Bowman's club had breezed to an NHL best-ever 60-8-12 record last year and had begun this sea-

son as everybody's favorite to win a third straight Stanley Cup, few could have foreseen any kind of victory binge following those losses. Playing without their accustomed cohesion, the Canadiens had only a 19-7-4 record at the time, hardly up to their lofty standards. After all, they had lost only eight of 80 games during the 1976-77 season—and already they had dropped seven of 30. So what did they do but go on their record-breaking 23-0-5 tear.

The Canadiens enjoyed the streak while it lasted and talked about keeping it going as long as possible—"so no other team will ever break our record," as Guy Lafleur said. When friends coaxed Defenseman Pierre Bouchard into Le Shuck, a St. Catherine Street striptease parlor, he noted, observing one of the dancers, "She's just like the Canadiens. She's streaking, too."

In the course of their stunning streak,

the Canadiens played every NHL rival except Minnesota at least once. And they pulled it off despite a staggering succession of ailments. All-Star Defenseman Guy Lapointe missed 23 of the 28 games, checking specialist Bob Gainey was lost for nine, and injuries and illnesses briefly sidelined Lafleur, Captain Yvan Cournoyer and Center Pierre Larouche. But flaunting Montreal's enviable depth, Bowman kept replacing the lame and halt with fresh troops.

Injury and illness were not the only things that kept Bowman scheming. As if to put down all those people who kid that the Canadiens are so powerful they don't need a coach, he shuffled lineups the way coaches usually do when they go 28 games without a victory. Then, for last week's game against Buffalo, all the Canadiens were healthy for a change, forcing Bowman to sit out three players. One player nominated for a night off was Forward Mario Tremblay, who had scored four goals and eight assists in the previous seven games. Bowman also played a hunch and started backup Goal-tender Bunny Larocque instead of his best man, Ken Dryden. And he shunted Steve Shutt, who led the NHL last season with 60 goals, off to a fourth line.

Shutt had 31 goals so far this season, and while this seemed a respectable enough total, it lagged far behind last year's pace. This can get a fellow in trouble in talent-rich Montreal. Bowman replaced Shutt on the top line with Rejean Houle, a speedy little forward who labors under the nickname of Peanut. A defensive specialist, Houle had improved his stock over the previous 11 games by scoring at a goal-a-game clip.

Larocque surrendered two easy Buffalo goals, so Bowman promptly brought in Dryden, who shut out the Sabres the rest of the way. Montreal won 4-2, with Jacques Lemaire scoring two goals and Larry Robinson and Houle the others. As for Shutt, he brooded for 72 hours and then exploded for four goals in a 5-1 romp over Cleveland, with Lafleur assisting on each. Ah, yes, Lafleur. In quest of his third straight NHL scoring title, the star right wing was skating like the wind and pecking up fistfuls of assists. Amassing 18 points in one seven-game stretch, he had 97 for the season and was only three points behind scoring leader Bryan Trottier of the Islanders.

With so much talent in Montreal anyway, Shutt hinted after his four-goal

outburst against Cleveland that the Canadiens' stiffest competition may come not from NHL rivals but from one another. "People ask whether we get bored with winning," he said. "Hell, we're too busy worrying about our jobs."

Which may account for the Canadiens' "hunger" and "desire," words that rivals bandy about when discussing Montreal. Those qualities were evident, certainly, when the Canadiens played Philadelphia in the Spectrum on Dec. 18, their next outing after the losses at Minnesota and Pittsburgh. The Flyers were the hottest club in hockey at the time and had four points more than slumping Montreal in the overall standings. Worse, Lafleur, Lapointe, Cournoyer and Larocque were sidelined with a variety of ailments. But, checking ferociously and getting inspired goaltending from Dryden, the Canadiens won 2-0. The Flyers have not been the same since, winning just 13 of their last 30 games.

For Montreal, the win in Philly was game No. 1 in the streak. In Toronto three days later Lapointe returned to action—he had been kept out by a groin pull—just long enough to catch a puck in the face, resulting in an injury that required minor eye surgery and sidelined him for two months. But the Canadiens beat the Maple Leafs 3-2 on a goal by Robinson with 48 seconds to go. That was No. 2. Then came six more wins and a rematch with the Flyers at the Forum. In that one, Montreal had to settle for a 3-3 tie when Philadelphia's Paul Holmgren scored on Dryden with one second to go. That tough break, though, was offset by more favorable ones. Like in No. 19, for example, when Montreal salvaged a 4-4 tie in Vancouver on goals by Lemaire and Houle with less than five minutes left.

On Feb. 12 the Canadiens beat the Rangers 5-3 at Madison Square Garden to stretch their unbeaten string to 23, equaling the record set by Boston in 1940-41 and tied by Philadelphia in 1973-76. When the Canadiens went for No. 24 in St. Louis three days later, Lapointe was back in uniform—and apprehensive. "I was worried about how my eye would be," he says. "I was also worried about how I'd feel if the streak ended the night I got back." With Lapointe playing only in spots, the Canadiens wiped out the Blues 6-2. Champagne flowed to Montreal's dressing room. The Canadiens next walloped Washington 8-2 for

No. 25, in their 16th and last road game of the streak.

Returning to the Forum for an extended home stand—and scoring seven third-period goals—Montreal whipped Colorado 9-4 for No. 26 before getting Nos. 27 and 28 over Buffalo and Cleveland. As the Canadiens rolled along, the awesomeness of their attack was underscored by the relatively minor role played by newcomer Larocque. In Pittsburgh, he had performed scoring heroics—he had 53 goals as a 20-year-old two years ago—but was an infant terrible who tended to sulk and skip practice. That was before he was traded to the Canadiens last November for Peter Mahovlich and rookie Peter Lee.

In Montreal, Larocque has done nothing naughtier than sneak an occasional cigarette while watching his favorite TV program, *The Gong Show*, on the locker-room TV. He has scored a modest 18 goals this season—12 of them with the Canadiens—and has received a lot of friendly reminders from Lafleur to devote himself more diligently to defense.

"I get on Pierre's back a lot," admits Lafleur. "I tell him Montreal is not Pittsburgh. Here we play two-way hockey."

Montreal players like to grumble about Bowman's constant shuffling of personnel, but the coach pays little heed. "The easiest thing a coach can do is avoid making changes, but I'm not interested in doing what's easiest," Bowman says. "We've got 20 players and 17 uniforms and when everybody's healthy, three guys have to sit out. It's a problem, but it's the kind of problem you like to have."

Bowman is capable of counting his blessings—and these, of course, are considerable. For one thing, his club's 28-game unbeaten streak is in the record book, and even with five ties it deserves comparison with the Los Angeles Lakers' NBA-record 33 straight wins in 1971-72; in a low-scoring sport in which a lucky bounce of the puck can cost you a game, merely avoiding defeat 28 times running is achievement enough. For another thing, the Canadiens are so far ahead of the runner-up Los Angeles Kings that they could clinch the Norris Division some time this week, with 18-odd games to play.

Still, as Hardy Astrom and the Rangers proved Saturday night, danger lurks at every turn. On some nights, even the first shall be last. That's what makes a hockey match.

HE SURE GOES LIKE SIXTY IN THE 60

Many stars faltered or failed to show up, but sprinter Houston McTear capped his phenomenal season by winning the 60-yard dash at the AAU Indoor Championships and setting his fourth world record in the last eight weeks **by JOE MARSHALL**

Houston McTear was angry. During the indoor track season he had won six of seven sprints, failing only in the Philadelphia Track Classic in which he was disqualified for two false starts. In the process, McTear had established three world records: 6.54 at 60 meters, 6.11 at 60 yards and 5.25 at 50 yards.

Yet on the morning of last week's AAU Indoor Track and Field Championships at Madison Square Garden, McTear felt slighted. "I want to win the national championship," he fumed, "because right now I feel people aren't giving me the credit I deserve. If I win here, maybe they'll pay me a little more attention."

McTear was sitting with his trainer, Larry McVey, in the lobby of a hotel across the street from the Garden. McVey stoked his runner's fire. "This is the fastest man in the world," he said. "We haven't looked at anyone's back this whole year, but you don't see Houston's name on the marquee at Madison Square Garden. You know what name they got up there? France Larrieu."

At last Friday night's meet McTear set matters straight. By the end of the evening he was sharing top billing with Larrieu, having been named along with the woman miler as the meet's outstanding competitors. Larrieu had earned the honor by kicking past Jan Merrill to win the mile in a meet-record 4:37. She then delighted the crowd by tossing autographed pictures of herself into the stands. But it was McTear who stole the show. He broke his own 60-yard world record, winning by an awesome three feet in 6.04. More important, McTear, who is renowned for his fast start, ran his record despite leaving the blocks second to Steve Williams, winner of last summer's World Cup 100-meter dash.

McTear wasn't surprised by his performance. Between his verbal outburst in the morning and his burst of speed in the evening he had telephoned his next-door neighbor in California and predicted his world record. Yet he didn't feel like basking in his indoor glory. "I want to go outdoors. I wish the 1980 Olympics were next week," he told reporters after the 60.

The press was quick to remind the 21-year-old McTear that success indoors doesn't necessarily carry over to the outdoor season, that just last year Steve Riddick won 15 of 16 indoor sprints and then flopped outdoors, and that a fast start wouldn't be enough to assure him of victory at 100 meters. McTear refused to have his spirits dampened. "I don't agree with those people who say all I've got is a fast start," he said. "None of the sprinters who say that about me ever ran a 9.7 in the eighth grade. You got to be fast to do that. I ran a 9.9 in the seventh

Steve Williams burst out of the blocks first, but he could not match the 6.04 pace set by McTear



PHOTOGRAPH BY MAMBY MELLAN

grade the first time I hit the track. In tennis shoes."

McTear's preeminence this winter stems from greatly increased self-confidence. He has transferred from Santa Monica Junior College to Cerritos College near Long Beach, Calif., because there he can get individual tutoring. Meanwhile, his association with the Muhammad Ali Track Club, which was founded by the late greatest to give athletes the same opportunities Ali felt the Louisville Athletic Association gave him when he was starting out, has brought stability to his life and training.

One of McTear's biggest handicaps in the past was that he was muscle-bound. He is a blocky 5' 7½", 158 pounds. When he was a high school senior in Baker, Fla., a pull in his right hamstring kept him from competing in the 1976 Olympics, even though he had qualified for the U.S. team, and that same pull bothered him all last season. "When Houston came to me, he couldn't touch the floor with his hands. His muscles were as hard as this wood," McVey said, tapping his fist on a table. "I'm a fanatic for stretching, and I've gotten Houston's muscles more pliable, more maneuverable. He doesn't have to worry about pulls anymore. The world is just beginning to see a healthy Houston McTear."

The Western Hemisphere, if not the world, also got its first look at a trimmer Maren Seidler last Friday. She has been America's best female shotputter since about 14 B.C. Or so it sometimes seems. She has been winning national championships since 1967 and now, at the ripe old age of 27, holds eight outdoor titles and six indoor. In 1974 she set the American indoor shotput record of 56' 11", a far space ahead of her closest competitor. But internationally Seidler is nothing. The world indoor record, held by Helena Fibingerova of Czechoslovakia, is 73' 9½", and Seidler's name does not appear among the top 20 on the world list. So six months ago she took off for Munich to train under a coach named Christian Gehrmann.

Gehrmann quickly shaved 25 pounds off Seidler's 6' 2", 220-pound frame while increasing her strength and improving her technique. "Before I just dabbled with training," Seidler says. "Now I know how to train with intensity and a sense of purpose. I feel that if I do the work I'll get results."

She has already gotten them. On Jan. 21 in Sindelfingen, Germany, she threw 61' 2½" at an indoor meet. She returned to America the night before the AAU championships. "I felt very, very good," she said with a big smile. "I was happy and anxious to say, 'Hey, this is what I'm able to do.'" Whom she would say it to was another matter, the AAU having scheduled her event in the afternoon, lest an errant shot squish McTear or some other sprinter through the Garden floor. Nevertheless, in front of her fellow competitors and close friends, Seidler became the first American woman to put the shot over 60' on American soil, indoor or out. Her high-arcing put of 61' beat the second-place throw by 11' 5¾".

McTear's and Seidler's heroics aside, the AAU meet was a curiously limp finale to what had been an exciting indoor season. McTear's race was the fourth event of the evening, and the program went downhill from there, deteriorating to the point where in the next-to-last race two women relay runners began exchanging blows with their batons and finally stopped running and squared off on the track. The AAU might well have wanted to forget the whole evening. For a national championship in an indoor season during which 29 world records were set, the meet was more notable for the competitors it didn't produce than for the competition it did produce.

Among the high points of this year's indoor season were Dick Buerkle's world-record mile, Mike Tully's world-record pole vault, Mary Decker's comeback as a middle-distance runner and the emergence of 18-year-old Renaldo Nehemiah as the top high hurdler in the U.S. Yet none of those athletes were in action at the Garden. Nor were Mark Beller, who recently set an American indoor record in the 880, milers Naal O'Shaughnessy and Filbert Bayi, sprinter Harvey Glance and 1,000-meter man Mike Bolt. The reasons ranged from injury to conflicts with college meets to ill-disguised lack of interest and disenchantment with the AAU. As one meet official said, "Because the AAU does nothing, or almost nothing, for the athletes in America, the athletes feel no obligation to participate in the AAU meet." A competitor put it more strongly. "It's a one-way relationship. The AAU just uses us to get more money for its TV contract. None of it ever filters down to us."

With all the dropouts, the high jump—a duel between the new and old world-record holders, Franklin Jacobs and Dwight Stones—figured to be a sure-fire highlight. But even that event fizzled when Jacobs couldn't get his steps down and performed, by his own account, "like an amateur," which the AAU, of course, hopes he is. To accommodate an unwieldy field of 24, the high jump opened at a record height of 7' ½". Jacobs cleared the bar on his first attempt but needed three tries to make the next height, 7' 2½", and then failed to clear 7' 4½". Stones made that height on his first try, then failed in three attempts at 7' 6½" but won the competition on fewer misses from Benn Fields, the only other jumper to clear 7' 4½".

As usual, Stones was openly contemptuous of the AAU and of the importance of winning the national championship. "Big deal. Who cares?" he said.

The first- and second-place finishers in each event were invited to join an AAU team for a March meet in Milan, Italy against a European team. Asked if he would accompany the team, Stones replied, "Of course not. I'll be competing in the World Superstars in the Bahamas." Stones recently finished second in the men's Superstars, and he conceded that his \$21,000 in prize money was more rewarding than the \$5 per diem the AAU gives its athletes abroad. Of course, the AAU also provides room and board. Stones characterized that as "some dump where you can eat pasta all day." In general, he seemed to agree with the coach who said, "First prize is three days in Milan. Second prize is a week in Milan. No one wants to go, and that's the big enticement to bring people to this meet."

Houston McTear, however, had needed no additional enticement to get him to the AAU Championships. As he and Larrieu were called to receive their awards as top male and female athletes, McTear saw a huge trophy and thought it was his. The trophy, however, was for the meet's winning men's team, the Philadelphia Pioneers. McTear had to settle for a weighty medalion. As he headed for an exit, he grumbled, "They didn't give me what I wanted. I wanted that big trophy." He was still playing the role of the angry young man, but he couldn't suppress a smile. After all, he was getting a little more attention. **END**

THIS MARTINA TESTS 100 PROOF



Navratilova stretched her winning record to 30 straight matches by beating Fromholtz at Cobo Arena.

Navratilova has been potent on the Slims tour, winning every tournament she has entered. Last week: Detroit

by SARAH PILEGGI

When the Virginia Slims traveling carpet and all-girl band got to town last week, Detroit was in the midst of a bad case of the grays. Car sales were down. The weather was lousy. The Pistons were a long shot for the playoffs, and the Red Wings were bumbling along 38 points behind Montreal.

Clearly what Motown needed was diversion, and the Slims show, a unique amalgam of sport and spangles that tours the country's major sports arenas for the first 13 weeks of the year, was just the ticket. The tournament, an annual fund-raising project of the Birmingham, Mich. Junior League—and the only sporting event in America with homemade brownies in the press room—drew the largest crowds in its seven years at Cobo Arena because the field included three of the biggest draws in the women's game. To wit, Evonne Goolagong, pursuing a comeback after the birth of her first child; Billie Jean King, playing singles on the Slims' green rug for the first time in three years; and Virginia Wade, winner of Wimbledon last summer and No. 2 in the world behind Chris Evert, who is sitting out most of the Slims tour this year (see box, page 22).

But it was Martina Navratilova, the gifted and mercurial 21-year-old Czech, who got the headlines in Detroit, just as she has been doing all winter wherever the Slims troupe slighted. With a resounding 6-3, 6-2 victory over Australian Dianne Fromholtz, Martina won a record sixth straight Slims tournament. (The previous record was held jointly by King and Goolagong.) Navratilova has won every tournament she has entered this season. She has won 30 consecutive matches, also a record, and she has lost only six sets in those matches. As her confidence has increased, her game has grown steadier, and she appears to be

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HERZ KLUTMEER

gathering momentum as she passes the milestones, one by one. For example, her scores in Detroit were 6-1, 6-2, 6-2, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4, 6-2; 6-3, 6-2.

Fromholtz, a dainty blonde left-hander, is a strong, aggressive player. She is the one player all year who has given Navratilova a difficult match, a three-set struggle in early January that went to 7-5 in the last set. To reach the Detroit final she beat Renee Richards 6-3, 6-4, Goolagong 6-2, 6-1 and King 6-3, 0-6, 7-6. Fromholtz has a reputation as a giant killer because she once upset Evert in the first round of a Slims tournament, something that had happened to Chris only once before, but the Detroit final was no contest. It was over in exactly 60 minutes and Navratilova never breathed hard.

"Martina looks as if she's unbeatable," says Herb Foster, the promotions man who travels with the tour. "She sizes up how hard she has to play and plays that way. She rolls all over the younger players. The great improvement is her serve. When she gets down she serves well. She is playing much better than she has ever played in her life."

Q: Martina, have you ever played better in your life?

A: Yes.

Q: Martina, are you unbeatable right now?

A: I can concentrate just about 100% now. Someone will have to beat me. I will not beat myself.

The surprise is not that Navratilova has lead the circuit in Evert's absence; she was a strong second to Chris on the 1977 Slims tour and has usually played well early in the year. The surprise lies rather in the juggernaut quality of her triumphs. The battle she was expected to have to wage with Goolagong for the top spot has not materialized. Although Goolagong launched her comeback impressively with four straight wins on grass in Australia in the late fall, she ran into trouble when she switched indoors and onto the Sportzette carpet used for Slims events. Her first tournament was in Florida. Martina had taken the week off to see her new hometown team, the Dallas Cowboys, win the Super Bowl, and in her absence Goolagong beat Wendy Turnbull 6-2, 6-3 in the finals. But in the process she badly injured her feet. A blistered



An occasional giant killer, Fromholtz knocked off Goolagong and King on her way to the finals

heel and a painful instep were the price. "I wanted to cut them off," she said.

Eyonne had to withdraw from Los Angeles because of her injuries, and, later, from Seattle because she came down with the flu and had a 103° fever. But between the two tournaments she and Navratilova finally confronted each other in the final at Chicago's International Amphitheatre. Martina won 6-7, 6-2, 6-2, but because Eyonne was not yet back in top form it was not the decisive engagement that had been anticipated. Nevertheless, beating Goolagong was an important psychological victory for Martina, who had lost to her in their last five meetings.

Another big psychological stumbling block that Martina overcame was Billie Jean King, the idol of her youth, her companion in practice and her friend and

partner in doubles. Circumstances, having mainly to do with Billie Jean's knee operations and convalescences, had prevented the two from playing each other since Martina joined the women's tour in 1974. Finally last fall, when King, as she said, "recycled" herself and won four tournaments, she also met and defeated Navratilova four times.

At Houston, the third Slims tournament of this year, they both reached the final, and there Martina won 1-6, 6-2, 6-2. King said afterward, "You only have so many moments in a match when you know you must make particular points. Martina played her particular moments better than I did. That's why she won."

Before the Detroit semifinals, when it looked as if King, not Fromholtz, might be Martina's opponent in the finals, Nav-

continued

ratkova was asked how she felt about Billie Jean. She said, without malice, "I'm getting used to her. I don't feel I'm playing my idol anymore. I feel more on the same level with her."

It is just possible that Martina is not on the same level with anybody anymore. Roy Emerson, Martina's coach on the Boston Lobsters, said a year ago, "If she'll really work harder on her game, she could leave Evert behind."

Still, the more she wins, the more she pressure to keep winning builds. "Winning is a disease," Navratilova said before the final. "Once you win you want

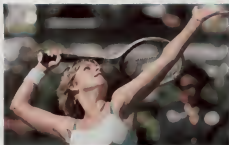
to keep winning. If you start losing you can't quit until you win again." Another day she had mused, "I can feel it in the locker room, pressure from people who want to break my string. Even when we play Rummy-Q, I feel I should win."

Navratilova's relations with the press have improved almost as much as her tennis. There was a time when she made no attempt to hide her contempt for the inevitable dumb questions of a press conference. She is more tolerant now. Last week it was she who repeatedly reminded reporters that Evert was not around and that they should keep that fact in

mind when evaluating her accomplishments. When she was asked if she felt she was No. 1 now, she replied, "I am No. 1 only if Chris is away. It takes a lot more than five tournaments to be No. 1. She'll be back soon, and then we'll see."

When Evert does return, she will find a Martina who is unchanged in that she will still bowl in outerage at a bad line call, but who is a new person in that she can also win the next point. The old Martina used to howl and lose the next six points.

"I haven't been making unforced errors. That is the difference." continued



GETTING BACK TO WORK

If anyone should beware the Ides of March this year, it is Martina Navratilova. The Slims tournament in Boston will be under way on that fateful day, and Navratilova probably needs neither blind soothsayers nor Paul Revere to let her know that Chris Evert will be there, ready to play her first competitive tennis of the year. And from the sounds of it, she will be ready.

It has been more than three months since Evert delighted the other women on the tour by announcing that she needed a long rest, that she was going home to Fort Lauderdale, have a nice visit with the family and friends and, above all, not play tennis. Her father predicted that she would quickly become bored, but such has not been the case. "I didn't touch a racket for six weeks," she says. "I haven't gone to the Mediterranean or Hawaii or any place exotic like that, but it's been very pleasant. Now I'm eager to play again."

Chris did venture outside Florida a couple of times, once going to New York, once to Los Angeles. Business, mostly, visiting with her dress designer, posing for Helene Curtis

ads. "I can't see my endorsements when I'm playing," she says. "On the tour all I think about is tennis."

In California she went apartment hunting, having been traded from the Phoenix Racquets to the Los Angeles Strings of World Team Tennis. She also played a little golf, coached by the noted low handicapper James Scott Connors. "He's really excellent," she says. "I'm O.K. around the greens but not so hot off the tee. Not strong enough, I guess."

Just before Christmas, Evert went to the closet, hauled out the old racket and began hitting the ball with her sister Jeannie, 20, who is also a pro. Nothing serious, just something to get back in touch with the game. "I wanted to stay in some kind of shape for the time when I began to work hard," she says.

That time came three weeks ago. Every day she has been rising around 9:30—"I enjoy my sleep"—fixing herself a breakfast of hot tea and yogurt or cereal and climbing into the family Cutlass with her father Jimmy for a half-hour drive to an indoor complex in North Miami called the Four Seasons. There

she has been playing with a local pro for 1½ hours under the watchful eye of her father. Then it's back home for a break until four. "I collapse," Evert says. "I have a snack and make a lot of phone calls."

At four it's over to Marina Bay with her brothers Drew, 24, and John, 16, for a little two-on-one, the old Harry Hopman formula for whipping his Davis Cuppers into shape. "We switch around," she says. "If you're doing two-on-one properly, you can't take more than five minutes at a time." She and her brothers and Jeannie never play actual sets. "We fight," she explains. "What we do is play points. One player serves 10 times, then the other. It breaks the monotony."

During the evenings Chris has become reacquainted with old friends she rarely has a chance to see anymore. Jeannie has a beau who plays the guitar at Chuck's Steak House in town, so the Evert girls are frequent visitors, listening to music, digging the scene.

It will not come as good news for the others on the Slims tour that Chris thinks she is just about in fighting trim, but then it will not surprise them either. "I'm hitting the ball clean," she says. "I'm enjoying practice, something I hadn't for some time." Besides hitting tennis balls, she has been jumping rope and running two miles every evening on the beach. "It's the only place I'd run," she says. "There's the salt air and the view to keep my mind off running."

In no way, Evert insists, has Navratilova's string of victories coaxed her back to the tour sooner than she had planned. "Martina deserves all the success she's had," Chris says. "I'm really happy for her. I had always planned on getting a couple of tournaments under my belt before team tennis began, and Boston was the first."

Martina plans to be there, too, as well as Virginia, Billie Jean and Evonne. It should be some reunion. —WALTER BINGHAM



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she says. "Now when I get mad at myself I get on my case and I settle down. I want to win the next point."

A powerful influence in Martina's settling process has been her friend and business manager, Sandra Haynie, the 1974 Women's Open golf champion, who retired from the LPGA tour a couple of years ago to begin representing professional athletes. Her Pro Sports Management currently handles three women golfers and two tennis players. Haynie is 13 years older and that much wiser than her, star client, and Navratilova listens to her. According to all observers it is Haynie who persuaded Martina to control her emotions on the court. Herb Foster says, "Sandy sits near the court, and when there is a questionable line call Martina will look at her instead of at the umpire or the referee, and Sandy, with a small gesture, says, 'Cool it.'"

An even more pressing question at the beginning of the Slims tour this year than who was going to replace Evert on the court was, at least as far as Philip Morris was concerned, who was going to replace her at the gate. Evert, King, Goolagong, Wade and, lately, Richards, sell tickets, but mostly Evert and King do. The Slims people predicted a 10% drop in attendance without Evert, but after seven tournaments the decrease is only about 5%, and it could as easily be accounted for by bad luck and bad weather as by an absent Chris.

Foster recounts the disasters. "In Florida we had a windstorm that knocked a truck off the freeway. In Houston it was 23° and the radio was saying, 'Don't go out,' the words a promoter most hates to hear. And in Chicago it snowed all week. We had 50,000 in Chicago as it was, but we could have had at least another 12,000 if it hadn't been for the snow." Furthermore, Billie Jean lost in the first round in Washington and retired in the first round in Los Angeles—in each instance it hurt the gate in the remaining rounds.

Fortunately, Philip Morris is still happy with its Virginia Slims promotion, even though there are probably more households in America today where Virginia Slims means women's tennis than where it brings to mind a skinny cigarette. Obviously, women's tennis is healthy if a circuit like the Slims can lose its superstar and suffer only minor repercussions at the box office. So on—to Kansas City, Dallas, Boston, Philadelphia and Oakland—with the show. **END**

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Each of these advertised items is readily available for sale as advertised.

SPRING, THE WAY IT WAS

When spring training opened earlier this week, most major league teams were running their wind sprints and getting ready to play their exhibition games in Florida, Arizona and California towns where tourism—and all that it brings with it—is a major industry. The Pirates were an exception. They were working out in Bradenton, Fla., a town whose only big business is citrus juice and whose spring-training tradition dates back to the Gas House Gang. Chances are the Cardinals of 40 years ago would have no trouble recognizing the old place. It manifests little of the tourist boom that has swept the state, and even McKechnie Field, the local park where the Pirates play their exhibition games, has none of the big-time trappings of its concrete counterparts in other Florida towns and cities. And few of the spectators there are vacationers, unless you count the grandchildren of the retirees who make up most of Bradenton's citizenry and baseball crowds. In a place where the pace of life is as slow as the speed limits, the idea of a big bash is the De Soto Festival, a strictly amateur historical reenactment that allows Bradentonians, old and young, to parade around in costume. All of which tends to make a spring-training visit to Bradenton special. To fans, the players are a little more accessible, the atmosphere is a bit more nostalgic and the games, somehow, are a little better.

Photographs by Walter Iooss Jr.









'FLORIDA LIKE YOU WANT IT TO BE'

That's how Bradenton advertises itself. Vacationers might disagree, but nostalgic baseball fans will not

The slight old gentleman wearing the Pirate cap sat alone in the grandstand behind home plate and waited for the gates to open. He said that he had come to Bradenton, the last of the old-fashioned Grapefruit League towns, after retiring from U.S. Steel and that he had been a Pittsburgh fan for 52 years. He had seen them all in that half century—Pie Traynor, Ralph Kiner, Roberto Clemente—and now there were some new kids he wanted to see. But before he could settle in for serious baseball watching on this fine March afternoon at McKechnie Field, he had some ushering to do.

The gates opened and in came the people, the hardy ones taking the bleacher seats in the sun and the others, a number of whom needed an usher's steadying arm, filling the rickety, covered grandstands. Before retiring to Bradenton they had punched clocks, raised kids and paid mortgages, but now they enjoy life day by day, inning by inning.

Unlike many of the fans at other spring-training sites, most of the folks at games in Bradenton are not passing through town on the way to Disney World. There are no motel keys in their pockets or peeling sunburns on their faces. They live here, attracted by the warmth and the sign on U.S. 41 extolling Bradenton as 'FLORIDA LIKE YOU WANT IT TO BE.'

A visitor's tendency to agree with that slogan will depend on how unsavory he finds the amenities—and excesses—that have become the staples of tourism in other Florida cities. Bradenton (pop. 26,000), which is located five miles from the Gulf Coast in Manatee County, certainly is not like the Florida pictured in travel brochures. There are no beaches, amusement parks or wax museums. You cannot bet on horses, dogs or jai-alai players. It is largely unspoiled by hamburger chains, miniature golf courses and neon signs. Instead, Bradenton offers two movie theaters, a museum of local history, a couple of modest hotels and an auditorium that was condemned and closed three years ago.

"We're different from other coastal towns," says Steve Albee, executive vice-president of the Manatee Chamber of Commerce. "The outlook here is very provincial. We spend only \$20,000 a year for tourist promotion, but there are some people who say I shouldn't spend that much. People are afraid of their town becoming a Fort Lauderdale."

Just about the only similarity between Bradenton and Lauderdale is that they both serve as spring-training headquarters. And even that similarity is largely superficial. In Fort Lauderdale the Yankees play exhibitions at a park every bit as modern and big-time as the city in which it is located. It is pretty typical of the spring-training parks—they could almost be called stadiums—in Florida nowadays. The Pirates use a park where some of the fences are still made of corrugated galvanized iron. McKechnie Field is a relic of the days when teams came to Florida on the train. Bra-

denton, too, retains the aura—if little of the elegance—of that era. And by refusing to change, it has become a unique and intimate stop in the Grapefruit League.

In 1968 the Pirates signed a 40-year lease to play at McKechnie Field and to live and train at a 100-acre site in East Bradenton known as Pirate City, thus becoming the latest of three major league teams that have made Bradenton their spring-training headquarters. The Milwaukee and Boston Braves preceded the Pirates in Bradenton; before the Braves, the Gas House Gang Cardinals of Frankie Frisch and Dizzy Dean made the town their headquarters. In those days the players stayed downtown at the fancy Dixie Grande; and Dizzy owned a nearby gas station. But that was a long time ago. The Dixie Grande and several other fine hotels have been either razed or converted into retirement homes. They are not so much victims of progress as they are of changing tourist tastes, which the town no longer is able—or cares—to meet.

Bradenton is not an especially pretty place, but at least it has not been trashed by commercialism. The irony is that it may not be commercial enough for its own good, because it needs a broader economic base. Almost 40% of the residents of Manatee County are above retirement age, which prompts Bradenton Mayor A. K. (Abbey) Leach to say, "Our biggest source of income is pensions." Trailers clustered together in monotonous parks account for 20% of the county's housing units. Largely ignored by the rest of the population are hundreds of poor black families who live in ramshackle houses on unpaved streets.

These problems seem less oppressive in March, when the Pirates play baseball and the annual De Soto celebration takes place. This event commemorates the landing of the Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto on a nearby beach in 1539. It is strictly an amateur production, but the costumes are authentic and the enthusiasm genuine. Only occasionally is there a slipup. One year the poor fellow, playing De Soto, looking every bit the conqueror in his plumed helmet and shiny breastplate, stepped out of his rowboat and nearly drowned in a sinkhole.

Last year Jim Ryan, a Bradenton businessman, stayed dry while playing the title role but suffered an identity problem. With his white beard, broad belly and red and black costume, he looked more like Santa Claus than an explorer. As De Soto week unfolded, Ryan led his men in the "capture" of various beaches and shopping centers. Finally they moved in to liberate McKechnie Field.

With swords drawn and muskets rained, the conquistadores ravaged the Pirate team while the Detroit Tigers stood by helplessly. After half an hour of this, the field was cleared of dead and wounded and a game was played.

The folks up in the stands enjoyed it. It was something they could write their grandchildren about. —LARRY KEITH

For a boy, growing up in Prairie City, Iowa meant comforting his sweetie when her defense was down, and glorying in the fact that the town's sports heroes were the girls who played in '46 by DOUGLAS BAUER

GIRLS WIN, BOYS LOSE



The trophy case in the old Prairie City, Iowa gym was of light pine, shellacked to a deep glaze. It was tucked into an alcove inside the front door, the statues and plaques crowded into it arranged in tiers like a chorus. Stylized halfbacks, forwards and sprinters, perpetually frozen in midstride, midmotion, stared through the glass. The largest trophy was in the center of the second row. Adorned with pennants and a couple of eagles, it stood at least six inches taller than the others, and it was topped with a figurine of a woman raising a basketball, about to go in for a layup. Her uniform had a lot of folds and pleats, and there was a certain timidity about the modeling, which brought to mind old anatomical drawings in health textbooks that fade to pastel blanks in certain areas. But she was clearly female, clearly moving to the basket. The base of the trophy was emblazoned:

GIRLS' DISTRICT CHAMPIONS
1948

PAIRIE CITY HIGH SCHOOL

No Prairie City team before or after has played its sport as well. Following its 1948 district championship, Prairie City competed in the Iowa High School Girls' State Championship, one of 16 teams from rural villages with populations in the hundreds to do so that year. Prairie City was beaten in the first round by the team that became state champion and, according to enduring local belief, would have been the champion itself if its coach had not stayed with a strategy so plainly wrong that the memory of it still ripples many of those who watched the game.

"He put Mona out front where she couldn't. . . . Guy's about as smart as a board fence. . . . Couldn't rebound out there. . . . Four fouls. . . . Fellow's brains wouldn't cover the bottom of a coffee cup." That's the sort of thing you hear if you bring the subject up at the co-op filling station when Dick Zaayer or Don Sparks is there.

For those too young to have been wit-

nesses, it has never been clear just what she coach did, beyond losing the championship. But what's important to know is that a powerful feeling about it has survived: that in this remote central Iowa town the idea of girls playing basketball can heat a conversation with emotions free of any condescension. One could grow up in the town in the late 1950s and early '60s, as I did, watching girls' sports without the least notion that there was anything prophetic about a custom that in small Iowa farming towns is as deeply embedded in the psyche as the suspicion of snakes and the certainty that a stranger is a Democrat.

Prairie City's girls usually had better seasons than its boys. When I was in grade school and went with my father to watch Janet Wilson release her fluid hook shot, the girls' team nearly always won. The boys, playing afterward, usually lost. And so we drove home with predictable dispatches. Mother, in a cone of reading light in her living-room chair, looked up as we came into the house and said, "Well?"

"Girls won, boys lost."

Girls won, boys lost. Girls won, boys lost. Tuesday and Friday nights. Season after season.

In fact, most nights the boys had their best moment while the girls' game was still being played. Almost all the high school students sat together in a section near the southwest corner of the gym. At the end of the third quarter, those boys who played basketball rose up like suddenly blooming plants. Because the game had stopped, attention was directed to the site in the bleachers, and the boys played to it for all it was worth, stretching to full height with elaborate indolence. There seemed to be the hard-bitten courage of soldiers in their rising; "Love to stay but the Huns are waiting." They slowly walked in single file the length of the floor, took a right, walked the width of the floor and disappeared into their dressing room.

After the girls' game was over, the boys

came out and got beat 68-37. But, Lord, they walked like champions. Naturally, then, my grade school heroes were Janet Wilson; Joellen Wissenaar, a quick, knife-then girl, her limbs milk-white stems, who faked a jumper and drove to either side; Margaret Morhauser, the powerful guard. I took notice of the way Judy Kutchin folded her sweat socks—down, then up again—so they formed snowy tufts above her shoes, and I resolved to wear, as Joellen did, only one (left) knee pad.

I was not alone in my adoration. In Iowa the girls' state championships draw better than the boys' tournament, invariably filling the 15,000 seats in Veterans' Memorial Auditorium, Des Moines, for five days in March. One could argue that the scheduling of the girls' games before the boys' in Prairie City implied the girls were a warmup act, a preview. But I have a clear memory of looking up into the balcony, its bleachers rising like a cliff wall, where the farmers and merchants, the town's strongest fans, sat in the dim, stucco light. Many of them put on their coats after the girls' game had ended. They knew they had just seen the best basketball they would watch that evening, and they were going home. Let the boys lose in front of their parents and their girl friends.

As it's played in Iowa high schools, girls' basketball differs significantly from the boys' game. There are six players to a team: three forwards who remain all evening on one half court, with the sole responsibility for the offense, and three guards who do nothing but guard the opponent's forwards.

After a score, the ball returns to mid-court, is handed to the other team, and a second half-court game begins. No one crosses the midcourt line. It is inviolable. Stepping over it or on it constitutes a turnover. With a half-court of momentum, a player must brake furiously once she reaches the line. Frantic bullets are danced all along it. A girl often looks as

continued

if she's teetering dangerously at a roof's edge as she strives to remain on her side of the court.

The other distinctive rules include one that stipulates that a girl must stop after two dribbles and pass or shoot. The game takes on a high synecopation. Bounce, bounce, pass. Bounce, pass, shoot. The two-dribble rule is the 24-second clock of the game; it accelerates it, raises its scores. Only a few seconds elapse between shots. The best teams frequently score 100 points. The best players sometimes score 100 points.

Various factors—the rules, the range of young women's accuracy—keep the game near the basket. Twelve-to-15-foot jump shots predominate and field-goal percentages are consequently high. A girl who cannot shoot 60% has a future as a guard.

But there's more, some believe, to the girls' accuracy than the short distances



from which they shoot. (From the free-throw line, eight of 10 or nine of 10 is routine. A girl who expects to win the annual state free-throw contest cannot afford to miss any of her 25 attempts. After a first perfect round, she will advance to a playoff.) One of the state's most successful coaches once claimed that girls have a unique sensitivity in the tips of their fingers.

"They're born with it," he says fervently. "They have something in their fingers boys don't have. Call it a gift, a feel, a fine tuning. Look at a girl's hands—soft, delicate. They're just better shooters. That's a fact that's clear as a sparrow's dew."

The Pentagon recently issued a report

that says women soldiers throw hand grenades more accurately than men. Thousands of lowans were, no doubt, not at all surprised.

Year after year the Prairie City girls fought Colfax for the Rock Lake Conference title. Only six miles of undulating farmland separates the towns. Their teams had played each other—all sports, both sexes—for many years, and were nearly always closely matched. Colfax, which is the larger of the towns, with a couple of thousand people, had a legacy of railroads and coal mines and a reputation as a rough and mean-spirited place. Its inhabitants, many of them no further than a generation removed from the dead mines, drank and cursed and took menacing energy from the phrases of the moon. And so, with the passing of genes, did the children who were the members of Colfax' teams.

Prairie City was reserved and humorless, predominantly influenced by a Dutch Reformed faith that found sin in dances, movies and playing cards. Secular happiness came from one's work, and if one hadn't felt a blood-rushing joy after lifting 80 bales of hay, then he should lift an 81st.

Three sour-faced Colfax guards, a kind of delinquent malice in their manner and expressions, remain memorable. They had sallow complexions and bags under their eyes that hinted of late hours and bad diets. Their hair was black, short, tucked behind their ears like matted wings. They had names like Flo and Martha Lynn and Irma. They were sinewy and quick, and they worked together with the precision of the machinery in a watch. It seemed to me as if they played for Colfax for about 12 years, a running presence through all the seasons of my memory. They were mean.

Here is a moment from their play, from the countless heated evenings of claustrophobic tension that Prairie City vs. Colfax inspired. Judy Kutchin stood with the ball at the top of the key, a teammate positioned on her right near the sideline. Her center, stationed beneath the basket, is swinging now parabolically toward the free-throw line. Kutchin passes to her teammate on her right and cuts for the basket. Right-sideline passes to center, ball and girl arriving simultane-

continued

ILLUSTRATIONS BY SAUL LAMBERT



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neously at the line. Center looks for Kutchin racing by. Give and go. A formulaic score. The classic maneuver of the game. Prairie City's fans are up to cheer, having already finished the play, having added the two points.

No! Flo springs from a crouch behind our center and roughly strips Kutchin of the ball. Martha Lynn comes rushing over like a vulture. Irma is angling upcourt, a receiver. Unanimous action against the gram. Martha Lynn sweeps up the ball and fires to Irma, who passes to one of her forwards waiting at the center line. It's done in a split second and with the timing of conspiratorial street thieves. Flo, Martha Lynn, Irma nod coolly. No doubt they'll committee-lip a cigarette after the game.

But just as often, Kutchin took the pass, deftly moved past the mugging and scored. Two for Calvinism.

When I was in high school, I sat in the student section, stood melodramatically at the end of the third quarter, walked the length of the court, took a right, walked its width and entered the dressing room. I was a bad basketball player, having neither size nor speed. Yet the school was so small that I won a uniform, a place on the 12-man squad and made the ceremonial walk with the rest of a mediocre team. I played perhaps three minutes and 12 seconds of high school varsity basketball. But I wore a knee pad, left knee only.

I was in love all the way through high school with Sue. She had a clean, petite beauty. She had a lilting laugh. She had large green eyes and soft, light-brown hair. She had breathtakingly shapely legs. She also had very quick feet and hands that could slap at a basketball like a rattler's tongue. She was an all-conference guard. When she graduated, she was given a trophy as Prairie City High School's best female athlete.

On the eve of a game, we would drive from school to her home in my 1951 semi-automatic Dodge. We would park in front and look out into the early-falling dark toward her unlit house. Sue's mother, a widow, had a job in Des Moines and did not get home until an hour or so after school was dismissed.



"Can I come in?"
"Not tonight," Sue would say, smiling. "Coach says we should rest. If we win tomorrow night, we'll be tied with Pleasantville."

"Just to talk?"
"We're talking right here." Not only her feet were quick.

"What do you want to do this weekend?"

"Depends. If we lose, Coach says we might have Saturday practice."

"Who you guarding tomorrow night?"

"Sandy Sampson. She's good. Has a good jump shot from the side of the lane. But she can't drive to her left. I'll overplay her, force her to the left, and it should be all right. Of course, if she's hot from out. . . ."

As she talked, I would gradually incline my head toward hers.

"... it won't be as effective, and I'll have to try to keep a hand—what are you doing?" And she would execute as neat a head fake as Pete Maravich.

No one cheered louder than I did during the girls' games, not only for the good of the school but also for the hope that Sue would have Saturday night off and could journey 25 miles to the blinking neon of Des Moines. Streetlights, movies, pizza afterward. "None for me, Coach says it slows you half a step." I cheered as well for Sue's mood that followed a win, because she was not an athlete who left her game in the dressing room.

It mattered little to me who won the boys' game. We were at best a .500 team and another loss could not set back non-existent title chances. And, as a substitute who had been given a place on the team mostly for the sake of symmetry, I became insulated from events on the floor. So after an evening's exercise that consisted of warming up twice and, if the outcome of the game was settled early, playing the final 27 seconds, I left the dressing room showered and eager for companionship.

Sue's play, however, always had an important influence on the outcome, and

she was in the lineup—working, stealing, fighting through picks—every second. If Prairie City lost, she was disconsolate and exhausted. If the team won, she was thrilled and exhausted. Neither condition allowed me much companionship, except to help her ease her spent body onto her living-room couch.

One night we sat on the couch in her darkened living room, close but not touching. There was a gap between us, one as narrow and nearly as inviolate as the center line in the game she had just played. Outside, students' cars were ritualistically roaming the streets after the game, their glass-packed exhausts deafeningly resonant. Her gloom was on every surface like a dull wax.

"It's O.K. It's O.K." I said. "You played great. It wasn't your. . . ."

"I played lousy, Sampson got 38 points. She drove on me like I was nailed to the floor."

"You couldn't hold her by yourself. You forced her to the left. You should have gotten some help from Ramona on that side."

"Coach told Ramona to stay put in the middle. Coach figured if we could keep Sampson going left, I would be able to handle her one-on-one."

Minutes passed. Outside, the engines throbbed at full volume. Finally, hoping against hope that the fog of her mood had lifted, I turned to her and whispered, "Whatcha thinking?"

"Oh, if I'd played up on her, nose to nose, hassled her as soon as she got the ball, then she wouldn't have had time to set up. She might have forced a shot."

There were lessons to be learned from those nights on the sagging maroon couch trying to console an all-conference guard who believed her play alone had led to a loss. Among the lessons were some first tentative feelings for the full equality of the sexes, for responsibilities. Free of any blame for the boys' team's performance, I said whatever comforting words there were to say and, mostly, listened. At the same time, I suppressed a deep wish to be able to trade the reserve's sweat-free innocence for the exhausted burden of Sue's talent. How great it would be to be so good that a bad night was the reason one's team had lost.

In the past dozen years, Prairie City

continued

has grown to a population of 1,200, an increase of 25%. New homes dot the streets, mixed in among the old ones like young buds. There is new construction everywhere, notably the new school building and its gymnasium.

The team's most recent star was a senior forward, Virginia McFadden, and her play was favorably compared by the men gathered in Harold (Hoop) Timmons' office beneath the co-op grain silos with Janet Wilson's, with Judy Kutchin's, even, hyperbolically, with Mona Van Steenberg's. Mona was the leader of the 1948 state tournament team and is a member of the Iowa Girls' High School Basketball Hall of Fame. Virginia was shorter, smaller, one heard, but quick and tough and a shooter pure as back-porch butter.

"I'd say she's got it over Mona," said a farmer seated near a whining space heater. He placed both hands inside the bib of his overalls and his arms flapped for emphasis like a dwarf's.

Hoop thought about it. "I ain't so sure," he said. "The game's a whole lot faster now, so you think of Mona being slow, but she could move. Those long legs of hers."

"Smooth," said another farmer. "Smooth is what Mona was."

"This girl scores more points," said the first farmer.

Hoop, an air of verdict about him, said, "You could argue it till you're silly as a pet coon." He looked up and saw a tractor hauling grain heading for his silos. "You gentlemen are free to stay," he said, looking as he spoke for the Folger's coffee can, bottom-lined with kernels, on the floor near the heater. His spittle. He found it and wet the kernels with a stream of Red Man. "I got to go to work."

Outside, Hoop waited near the deep grate-covered hole into which the grain would be unloaded. The tractor came up to him and moved past, big as a house, pulling two wagons with mountains of grain sloping above their tops. The tractor roared and then abruptly quieted as it negotiated the narrow space between

the silos. Idling, it came to a stop precisely above the hole. Most farmers bringing their grain in brake too abruptly, setting their wagons into clangorous jerking, but this movement was clean, light, agile. Hoop raised the wagon doors, let loose the hussing fall of grain and waved to the driver. A broad, comradely wave, appreciative of the skill that made his own work easy: over the hole, open it up, let it drop.

From inside the tractor's cab, the driver, Virginia's mother, returned Hoop's salutation. She had shown where Virgin-

es in the small schools place their belief in the enduring will of the rural athlete. "It seems to me," said the coach of a small Iowa school that almost always makes the tournament, "that a farm girl still knows how to hurt a little more."

At the north end of Colfax, near the junction of Highway 117 and Interstate 80, there is a diner popular with long-distance truckers and farmers. On a recent visit, I pulled in for Iowa eggs and bacon before going onto the interstate. As I walked inside I saw three women clustered around the cash register. They were huddled, as if planning some strategy. They wore the pink cotton uniforms of the diner. Sallow complexions, bags beneath their eyes. Lithe and poised for play. Flo, Martha Lynn and Irma.

"Scramble two, whole wheat, extra sausage," yelled the cook from her window at the back, placing a plate of food on a serving sill. The waitresses broke from their huddle. "Hot pork on white, mashed, extra gravy," yelled the cook, placing another plate beside the first. Flo picked up the eggs and headed for her customer on the left side of the horseshoe-shaped counter. Martha Lynn, sweeping up the hot-pork plate, fell in a step behind her. Irma, with a coffee pot, worked the right side, moving down the counter of empty cups, dipping the pot as if she were watering a row of plants.

"Hiya, Flo," said a trucker, frisky with sleep or pills to fight in. "Howya doing?" He reached a hand for Flo's hip as she swished past with the haste of a woman at work. Flo gave the trucker a quick move and left his hand punching air. Martha Lynn, a step behind, knowing the move, did not break stride. "Watch the hand, honey," she said to the trucker, "less you want hot pork in your ear." And she moved on swiftly with her plate, handing, as she walked, another customer's check to Irma, who had finished her coffee refills and stood up front at the register, waiting for the pass.

Girls win, boys lose. Girls win, boys lose.



in got her touch. "Call it a gift, a feel, a fine tuning. . . . They have something in their fingers a boy doesn't have."

Like all games, girls' basketball has become swifter and surer with the years. But all that has fundamentally changed is the size of the schools playing the game. The larger Iowa cities, some with three and four high schools, now have teams, and there is fear that these schools, with more money, better facilities, a greater pool of players, will dominate the tiny farming towns. The New York Yankee syndrome. In the face of that fear, coach-

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by FRANK DEFORD

MOVIES

As everybody knows, all dog movies are about little boys who love their dogs, and all horse movies are about little girls who love their horses. This is dutifully inscribed in the *Hollywood Chitchat Rule Book* under the sub-section "Freckles." We all can remember the precious pig-tailed miss delivering this obligatory second-reel line: "But, Mister Tom, you can't sell Blue Bonnet! You can't! You can't! He's going to win the Derby!"

But now, breed-improver fans, it is unsex time. Nothing is sacred anymore. (Which also means that for this movie they couldn't get Tatum O'Neal.) Casey's Shadow is about a boy and his horse. Except for Alexis Smith—who has been cast in the role of a bank account—and a brave girl jockey, this is an all-boy horse movie. But, different sex aside, the movie is the same breed—strictly *The Story of Seabiscuit* '78.

Oh, to be sure, there are concessions to modern tell-it-like-it-is-ism, an occasional naughty word, the graphic birth of a foal. More important, there is also the dramatic presentation of a very real sin in American racing: horsemen being lured by huge purses into running injured horses as well as young colts before they are ready. And in dealing with this subject, here, at last, we could have had a mature movie. But Casey's Shadow is a cheap charmer trying to compete in the feature allowance, an unassuming children's movie with pretensions to adult reality. It is bound to fail for both audiences.

Walter Matthau (above) plays the central character, Lloyd Bourdelle, a slovenly but lovable Cajun, father of adorable little Casey (and two older sons) and trainer of beautiful Casey's Shadow. Matthau, no stranger to horses and pan-muscle windows, is likewise familiar with this role, having played virtually the same character in *The Bad News Bears*. So it's a gimme for Matthau—and worse, the script calls for him to chew tobacco. Whenever an actor chews tobacco, he forgets everything he ever knew about acting, believing that he can transmit all human emotions by just a-chawin' and a-sprittin'. But 'tain't so. Of course, here it doesn't matter much anyway, inasmuch as the horse has the best lines.

The horse, Casey's Shadow, is a quarter horse, not a thoroughbred. The bulk of the action takes place on location at Rudoso Downs in New Mexico, where a \$1 million futurity is run every summer. But sadly, while the early scenes in Cajun Louisiana convey a sense of place, the unique cowboy folksiness of Rudoso is buried under the hackneyed plot.

The film's few fine authentic moments are just enough to make us fret for what might have been. The birth of Casey's Shadow is,

at the least, clinically revealing, and some superb footage in the starting gate is, in its way, every bit as instructional. Seldom have we been shown on film how dangerous and exciting a jockey's job is. But above all, never before in the movies has horse racing been called to task for sending dumb, and often drugged, animals to their death by running them before their bones are properly formed or knit.

Alas, this is too subtle a visual issue to support a movie that is aimed largely at children. X rays just do not play the Bijou. So this whole excruciating dilemma—run the horse and run the risk, or side the stud money and run—which descends upon Matthau, forcing him to make painful choices, forcing him to develop his character, is largely lost. Instead, the plot plays up two baneful rivals (a trainer, Robert Webber, and his owner, Murray Hamilton), who portray such dreadful cinema prototypes of villainy that one can only suspect that in their spare time they must be trussing up virgins on railroad tracks. Whatever real conflicts Matthau's trainer must face, whatever Casey's Shadow could suggest about the failed conscience and responsibility of American horsemen is generally left in the barn.

The script, by TV writer Carol Sobieski, gets little imaginative support from director Martin Ritt or the technical staff, and the music by Patrick Williams is an intrusive liability. Casey, played by a newcomer, Michael Hershewe, is a winning little whippersnapper. As for Miss Smith, she is much too classy and has aged too well to be recycled into such humdrum precocious—just as Mr. Matthau should stop treading dramatic water, suffering competition with adorable children and animals, and get back to acting against human grown-ups.

ANOTHER CASEY STRIKES OUT



END



Mychal Thompson, likely the pros' top selection, has given Minnesota his all

Even the shirt off his back

Saturday the University of Minnesota, of its own free will, will do something that for nearly two years it fought to keep the NCAA from doing—take the shirt off Mychal Thompson's back.

In a ceremony at halftime of the Gophers' final game of the season, against

Michigan State, Thompson's No. 43 jersey will be retired, bringing to a fitting climax a playing career that has been, in a very real way, heroic in the face of scandal. The ceremony will also put the 6' 10" senior center in the same category with such similarly honored Big Ten stars as Cazzie Russell and Jerry Lucas.

"It will be a storybook finish, that's for sure," says Thompson, a handsome, well-spoken extrovert from Nassau, Bahamas who has both intelligence and a ton of determination. "In the worst of times, playing at Minnesota has been a learning experience for me. I got letters of encouragement from Hubert Humphrey, I got to know another way of life in a different climate, and I was never embarrassed by what I did. Nobody told me not to and I was too young to know any better."

What Thompson did that got him in trouble with the NCAA was sell two season tickets—worth \$78—to a pair of Minnesota fans, who paid him \$178. It was scalping, pure and simple. But the incident took place in December 1974, when Thompson was a freshman and scalping was a more common practice among major-college athletes. Coming as it did during the last days of the ill-starred regime of Gopher Coach Bill Musselman, whose abuse of power led to an NCAA investigation that turned up more than 100 violations, Thompson's misdemeanor might have been overlooked if he had not freely admitted it in an in-house investigation by Minnesota's own attorney. He gave the money back immediately, and the university thought that would be the extent of his personal troubles. However, in March 1976, when the Gopher basketball team was placed on probation for two years, an NCAA memorandum stipulated that Thompson should be declared ineligible because of the scalping. After the university refused to do this and continued to play him, the NCAA slapped an indefinite probation on all Minnesota teams.

Throughout this hassling, Thompson played as though he hadn't a care in the world. Following a disappointing freshman year in which he was bothered by shin splints and was described as "not tough enough" by Musselman, Thompson caught fire under new Coach Jim Duescher. In the ensuing three years he

has averaged 23.5 points and 10.7 rebounds, shot .574 from the field and triggered a blazing fast break. This season his outlet passing sparked a 22-5 Gopher spree against Ohio State and a remarkable half of shooting (22 for 25) by Minnesota against Iowa. And despite the fact that the Gophers are ineligible for the NCAA tournament for the second straight year, Thompson has kept them in the Big Ten race all season. But a pair of defeats last week—94-87 in overtime at Ohio State and 68-47 at Indiana—mean that the best the Gophers can do is tie for the title with Michigan State and, possibly, Purdue.

In the overtime loss in Columbus, Thompson scored 32 points, knotted the game 77-77 with a driving shot in the last 18 seconds and preserved a tie in regulation time with a block of Kelvin Ransey's layup with :04 to play. In fact, Thompson not only blocked the shot, but he also swatted the ball all the way to midcourt, where teammate Osborne Lockhart, a boyhood friend from Nassau, scooped it up and nearly won the game with a basket that barely missed beating the buzzer. On Saturday, against Indiana, Thompson brought his career scoring total to within 23 of the Big Ten record of 1,461 points held by Purdue's Rick Mount. That mark should fall at just about the time Thompson's shirt is retired.

Over the course of his career Thompson has proved his mettle to NBA scouts by winning duels against the best college centers in the country. As a sophomore he blitzed Bo Ellis and Jerome Whitehead of Marquette with 29 points and 16 rebounds in a 77-73 victory over the Warriors, then ranked No. 2 in the nation. Four days later he rummied in 34 points and grabbed 11 rebounds against Stanford's seven-foot Rich Kelley, now a starter with the New Orleans Jazz. Last season, as the star of a 24-3 team that many experts felt might have been the best in the country, Thompson led Minnesota to a 40-18 halftime advantage over Marquette in Milwaukee. He ended up with 23 points and 16 rebounds as the Gophers coasted to a 66-59 victory over the eventual NCAA champions. Thompson later scored 35 points against Indiana's Kent Benson, who went first in the '77 NBA draft.

continued

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No wonder Thompson may be this year's top pro pick; only Indiana State's Larry Bird is likely to go ahead of him, if Bird decides to forgo his senior year. The three teams with the best chances of drafting first—Kansas City, Indiana and Golden State—all think Thompson, a 226-pounder with speed, can play forward in the NBA, a testament to his outside shooting. But as King Coach Larry Staversman says, "Thompson also easily could be an Alvan Adams or Dave Cowens kind of high-post center. What all the pros like about him is the way he comes to play every night. He's had to be dedicated in his situation or he would have chucked it all and signed after his junior year."

The Buffalo Braves thought he would, and last summer offered him a multi-year contract worth about \$1.5 million. Brave General Manager Norm Sonju describes the negotiations: "I met with Thompson and asked him what his goal was. I expected him to answer, 'to be NBA Rookie of the Year.' Instead, he said, 'I'd like to lead the Big Ten in rebounding again, break Rick Mount's scoring record and have my uniform retired.' I told him the only place he could do those things was at Minnesota."

After sitting out the first seven games of this season—a compromise penalty agreed to by the NCAA in return for Minnesota finally declaring him ineligible—Thompson has put together another string of memorable games, among them a 15-for-20 performance against Iowa that included 16 rebounds, four assists and five blocked shots. Hawkeye Coach Lute Olson said, "We don't have anyone—just like no team has anyone—who can contain Thompson."

"Mychal will end up with more respect, having handled all his trouble so well, than if he had simply been a great player who never did anything wrong," says Dutcher. "My biggest disappointment is that he never got to the NCAA tournament. Florida State's players came off probation in 1971 and made it to the NCAA finals. The 27-0 N.C. State team that was on probation in 1973 was practically intact when it won the NCAA title the next year. And Nevada-Las Vegas played in the semifinals last year before the NCAA caught up with it. But nobody's going to see Mychal play."

"I had to come back for my senior year because the Minnesota people had gone to bat for me," says Thompson. "I

figured the NBA money would still be there, so a friend had a T shirt made up for me that reads WHAT'S A MILLION DOLLARS across the chest. If I had the ticket thing to do over again, I'd probably lie about it just to avoid the trouble. But it has made me a better person. On Saturday I'll be proud and sad, but it's time for bigger and better things. I don't care who I play pro ball for. I've been through so much adversity that I can handle anything now."

Thompson may be 6' 10" but clearly he is still on the way up.

THE WEEK

(Feb. 20-26)

by MIKE DELNAGRO

MIDWEST As his TV show opened a week ago, Texas Coach Abe Lemons was shown lying on the floor in a dark suit, his hands folded on his chest, clasping a carnation. An organ was playing funeral music. Then Lemons slowly got up, turned to the camera and shouted, "We're not dead yet!"

A resurrection it was. Arkansas, the Southwest Conference leader, had been upset by Houston, enabling Texas to tie the Razorbacks for first. Two days later Texas beat SMU 82-74 to clinch the SWC co-championship. Swingman Ken Baxter scored 18 of his 30 points during an early second-half surge that lifted Texas from a 41-41 deadlock to a 17-point lead. Still, Lemons was not about to get cocky. "I think we've got a guardian angel," he said. "I just hope he doesn't fly away." Arkansas tied its half of the co-championship by outclassing Texas Tech 58-49.

"We had trouble living with prosperity in the past," said Florida State Coach Hugh Durham. "Whenever we'd move up in the rankings, we'd play a bad game." Not this time. Led by David Thompson's 45 points, the Seminoles swept a home-and-away series with Georgia Tech, 78-72 and 85-82, to nail down the Metro 7 title. Coming off three straight road losses and a nose-dive from No. 9 to No. 20 in the AP poll, Louisville drubbed Ball State 104-84 and Memphis State 115-97. Against the Tigers, the Cards' Larry Williams had a career-high 31 points.

Creighton locked up the Missouri Valley championship with a 62-56 win over Southern Illinois, and DePaul ran its record to 23-2 by winning 54-41 at Air Force. Kansas, the Big Eight champ, rolled over last-place Colorado 70-60.

1. ARKANSAS (27-2)

2. KANSAS (23-3) 3. FLORIDA ST. (21-4)

MIDEAST Shortly after arriving on the floor for Kentucky's rematch with Alabama, which had handed the Wildcats one of their two losses, Coach Joe Hall turned cheerleader, waving his arms and whipping Kentucky students into frenzy. Then Hall's team gave the fans plenty to roar about, uncoiling a 12-0 scoring binge late in the first half that allowed the 'Cats to coast to a 97-84 win. Jack Givens sank nine of 10 field-goal attempts. Rick Robey hit on six of six and Mike Phillips canned five of seven as the Wildcats shot 67% from the floor. "We're back now," Hall cheered, referring to some luck/lust Kentucky played of late. "I think we'll be back from now on. I feel good about the rest of the season."

Later Kentucky secured the Southeastern Conference championship and an NCAA playoff bid by defeating Tennessee 68-57. Givens again led the Wildcats with 18 points. Even though the Vols lost, Johnny Darden of Tennessee, which trailed by only three points with six minutes to play, thought that Hall's good feelings were ill-founded. "Kentucky's big and slow," he said. "I don't think it can go all the way."

No. 1-ranked Marquette was headed for a fall in the ratings after being tripped up by a late Notre Dame rally in a 65-59 loss. The Warriors led from the opening tap—they were once ahead by 17—until, with 2:50 left to play, Irish Guard Don Williams drilled in a jumper to give Notre Dame a 58-57 lead. Freshman Forward Kelly Tripucka, who had been held scoreless in the first half, paced the Notre Dame resurgence with 15 points.

Earlier the Irish whacked North Carolina State 70-59, as Dave Burton scored 22 points and the Notre Dame defense held the Wolfpack to 34% shooting.

Michigan State took a two-game lead in the Big Ten by beating Northwestern 66-56 and Illinois 89-67, while Minnesota, which entered the week tied with the Spartans for first place, lost road games to Ohio State and Indiana. Michigan State freshman Earvin Johnson led the Spartans over Northwestern with 16 points and eight assists, but it was junior Forward Greg Kiefer, overshadowed by Johnson most of the season, who shone against the Illini. He had 32 points and 14 rebounds. The Spartans can now do no worse than tie for the Big Ten title and are virtually assured an NCAA playoff bid.

Detroit (23-2) pulled even with DePaul and Illinois State in the race for the nation's best won-lost percentage by mauling St. Francis (Pa.) 121-89 and nipping Xavier 82-77. Against the Red Flash, Forward John Long pumped in 29 points and Center Terry Tyler had 24, although both played less than three quarters of the game. In the Xavier victory, a Titus streak of four 100-plus-point games came to an end.

A streak ended in women's basketball, too.

continued

In the state championship game, Mississippi (20-13) eked out a 73-72 victory over Delta State, which had not lost at home in 56 games.

1. KENTUCKY (22-2)

2. DuPAUL (22-2) 3. MARQUETTE (22-3)

WEST An immense U of light bulbs is mounted on the side of a hall overlooking Utah's campus. Last Thursday the Big U flashed long into the night, commemorating an incandescent moment for the Ute basketball team—a 95-92 upset over New Mexico. The victory avenged an earlier 24-point setback in Albuquerque, snapped the Lobos' nation-leading 14-game win streak and killed New Mexico's chances for an unprecedented perfect record in WAC play. Neither team could swing the game its way until, with 4:30 left, steals by Utes Michael Grey and Buster Matheny led to a pair of baskets and the start of a Utah rally. Jeff Judkins sank 12 of 15 shots, and the Ute ballhandlers committed only nine turnovers, 20 fewer than they had in losing at Albuquerque.

New Mexico rebounded by rolling over Brigham Young 71-66 as Marvin Johnson hit on 10 of 14 and scored 25 points, but

Couch Norm Ellenberger was unimpressed. "It's no classic war when you commit 22 turnovers against a rather dole defense," he said. "Somewhere along the line we've lost intensity, and we've got to get it back."

UCLA has not lost a thing. The Bruins clinched their 12th consecutive Pac-8 title by trouncing flu-stricken Oregon State 96-58. All but four Beavers—and they were reserves—had missed practices because of flu, which prompted Coach Ralph Miller to make 23 substitutions in the first half. UCLA led only 19-15 after 12 minutes, but then ran off 10 straight points and coasted to victory. The Bruins also thrashed Oregon 83-57, the Ducks' worst home loss since 1968.

"I'm going to play like I had rockets in my shoes," said San Francisco Forward Doug Jensen shortly before the Dons' WCAC championship showdown against Nevada-Reno. With that, Jensen launched himself to a career-high 21-point performance, and USF landed a 78-73 victor. Earlier, San Francisco defeated St. Mary's 87-81, while Nevada kept its WCAC hopes alive by edging Santa Clara 70-65.

Montana, picked in a preseason Big Sky coaches' poll to finish fifth, whipped Idaho

State 92-77 and Boise State 73-67 to finish with a 12-2 conference record and the championship. Senior Guard Michael Ray Richardson led the Grizzlies in their clinching victories with 61 points.

Fresno State, last in the PCAA a year ago topped Santa Barbara 41-31 and L.C. Irvine 41-37 to earn a share of the conference title with San Diego State, a winner over San Jose State and Pacific.

1. UCLA (22-2)

2. N. MEXICO (22-3) 3. SAN FRANCISCO (22-5)

EAST Going into the ACC title showdown vs. Duke, North Carolina seemed to be in trouble. The Tar Heels had been beaten 72-67 two days before by North Carolina State; All-America Guard Phil Ford was nursing a sprained wrist, and star Forward Mike O'Koron had a sprained ankle. Both had missed the N.C. State loss. Moreover, Duke had walloped Clemson 78-62 earlier in the week for a fourth straight ACC win that all but convinced conference fans that the Blue Devils were the class of the league. Even Ford wondered "Inside (Forwards Gene Banks and Ken Dennard and

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Center Mike Gminski, Duke has one of the best front lines I've seen in college," he said.

Against the Tar Heels, Duke raced to a 37-28 lead, but then Ford ignited a three-minute rally that enabled the Tar Heels to cut the gap to 37-36. Thereafter it was a dog-fight to the finish. With less than two minutes left, Gminski scored, cutting a North Carolina lead to 84-82, and Duke Guard Jim Sparnkel hit a free throw to make it 84-83. That was the Blue Devils' last gasp. North Carolina's stall lured Duke into fouling, and O'Koren sank a free throw and Ford carried two to put the game out of reach 87-83. Books had 25 points, Sparnkel 23 and Gminski 21, but they could not outdo Ford, who scored 34 points and played perhaps the best all-round game of his notable career.

Providence, ranked 11th by the Associated Press, folded twice in the normally salubrious confines of its own Civic Center. First Rhode Island toppled the Friars 73-64 in a remarkable turnaround. Three weeks before, Providence had thumped the Rams by 20 points. Then St. John's overcame a five-point deficit with six minutes to play and upended the Friars 60-51. Trailing 43-38, Redmen George Johnson, Kevin Wainwright and Ben-

nard Rencher got consecutive baskets that gave St. John's the lead. One oddity of the game was that only three Friars scored from the floor. Another was that Providence had now lost two in a row at home for the first time since 1975.

Syracuse ran its record to 21-4 by crushing Fordham 109-62 and Boston College 97-80 and surviving a fierce battle at Niag-

PLAYER OF THE WEEK

PHIL FORD: Playing with a sprained wrist, the North Carolina guard hit eight free throws and 13 of 19 shots from the floor—10 of them from 15 feet and beyond—for a career-high 34 points in the Tar Heels' win over Duke.

ara. Against the Purple Eagles, Marty Byrnes dropped in a layup to put the Orange ahead 70-69 with 0:18 left to play. Niagara's Garry Jordan then got the ball inside, pumped and let fly with what might have been the winning basket—had not Syracuse Center Roosevelt Bouie slammed the ball right back in Jordan's face. "He fouled me across the eye," Jordan said. Replied Bouie, "It was all bout."

George Washington 71, Georgetown 69. Two seconds to go. Craig Eshrick, a substitute Hoya guard who has the ball 35 feet out, heaves from the hip—and—Bingo!—it sails through the net. His total playing time? Ten seconds. The shot made the Hoyas' 78-77 overtime win anticlimactic. Before being upset by Fordham 63-59 Georgetown also defeated Holy Cross 77-61 to run its victory total to 22, the most in Hoya history.

Temple got its highest number of regular-season wins in 20 years (22-3) with victories over Ivy League-leader Penn (71-56) and St. Francis of New York (81-67). Against the Terriers, Forward Tim Claxton, who used to get so jittery that he had to be pulled from important games, shot 12 for 15.

West Virginia beat intrastate rival Marshall 80-73 in the first meeting between the schools since 1931. Another West Virginia team, Fairmont State, won its eighth straight West Virginia Intercollegiate Conference title, notched a 20-win season for the 15th consecutive year and ran Coach Joe Rendon's record to 385-63 by defeating Salem (W. Va.) 79-69.

1. NORTH CAROLINA (23-6)
2. DUKE (20-6) 3. SYRACUSE (21-4)



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It's tough playing favorites

The road to Churchill Downs is wide open for a classy crop of 3-year-olds



Alydar is the big hope for Calumet's comeback

Interest in 2-year-old racing usually dissipates in mid-October when the winner of the Champagne Stakes crosses the finish line at Belmont Park. Prisoners of tradition and form that they are, racegoers associate a Champagne victory with a championship, and in 12 of 15 seasons before 1977, the Champagne winner was named the 2-year-old titlist. Last year, however, Calumet Farm's Alydar won the Champagne in impressive style, only to finish second to Affirmed in the voting for the best of his generation.

Alydar and Affirmed have met on six memorable occasions, with Affirmed winning four times. However, after running a total of slightly more than five miles against each other, Affirmed leads Alydar by only three feet. Each is now on a different course leading to the May 6 Kentucky Derby, with Affirmed at Santa Anita and Alydar at Hialeah, and they will not meet until Churchill Downs. Off their performances of last year, however, the 3-year-old season looks like a dandy.

Had Alydar not run again after the Champagne, he probably would have been voted the top 2-year-old. But he stayed around for two more races, the Laurel Futurity and Remsen Stakes. "We

had the Laurel in our plans for Alydar all along," says trainer John Veitch. "He still needed some experience and the Laurel is a fine race to win. In the Remsen, it might have been a case of my just getting greedy. He didn't run like the real Alydar at all."

One recent morning Lazaro Sosa Barrera was standing by the rail at Santa Anita, where the persistent California rains have dampened his plans for Affirmed. While the trainer has been able to get some excellent workouts into his colt, Affirmed, who will have Steve Cauthen as his jockey, has yet to run in 1978.

"Affirmed is one of the best horses I've ever put my hands on," Barrera was saying, his hands deep inside the pockets of his navy blue parka. "That Laurel Futurity was one of the most amazing races ever run. Anywhere! Anytime! Any country! [Hands come out of pockets.] They hook up and go at each other like a couple of fighting chickens, only there is no chicken in either one of them. Before the race was run, both John Veitch and I felt that it could be a great race, but not as great as it turned out to be. [Hands form two fists and are held at arm's length.] Four horses, that's all. The third horse, Star De Naskra, is a stakes winner and the fourth horse is 40 to 1. The third horse gets a little lead for a while, and then Affirmed and Alydar take over. [Side of right fist pressed to side of left and both wiggled.] Alydar sticks a head in front [right fist advances slightly], then Affirmed [left fist goes out]. Then nobody is in front. They are running 16, 17 lengths ahead of the other two. When they hit the wire, Affirmed wins by a neck. I was happy and proud because he won, but I knew he had run up against a very tough racehorse. Alydar has been tough all along."

A month after the Laurel, Hickory Tree Stable's Believe It beat Alydar in the Remsen at Aqueduct, and those who didn't believe it had better. The two will meet again this Saturday in the first big event of the 3-year-old season, the 1½-mile \$100,000 Flamingo Stakes, and the results will carry far beyond the jasmine, bougainvillea and royal palms that help make Hialeah such an elegant playground. Believe It and Alydar have had an outing this season and handled the opposition easily. Those who saw both races

continued



Believe It, who has found plenty of believers, will challenge Alydar again in this week's Flamingo



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HORSE RACING continued

are hard put to say which horse they like better, but there is no doubt now that Believe It, trained by Woody Stephens and ridden by Eddie Maple, has gained a lot of fans.

Alydar, with Jorge Velasquez scheduled to ride him, will be the Flamingo favorite, but not as heavily backed as were Seattle Slew, Honest Pleasure and Foolish Pleasure in the last three runnings. The reason is simple: this crop of 3-year-olds may well turn out to be the best since 1957, when Bold Ruler, Round Table, Gallant Man, Iron Liege and Gen. Duke competed. Those horses swapped the major races leading up to the Triple Crown; after the favored Gen. Duke was injured, Iron Liege, Bold Ruler and Gallant Man each took one of the big three. "This year the 3-year-old season is going to be something special," says trainer Oscar Dishman Jr. "Anyone can knock anyone else off at any time. It looks like there will be plenty of wild scrambling before it's over."

Of the top dozen 3-year-olds, most are homebreds belonging to Establishment racing people. Thus far there doesn't seem to be any \$17,500 bargain yearling around owned by young folks from White Swan, Wash. The top half-dozen of last year's 2-year-olds were weighted in close order on the Experimental list, that evaluation of both ability and potential, with Affirmed pegged at 126 pounds, Alydar at 125, Believe It 124, Forever Casting 122, Balzac and Sauce Boat 120 each. While the Experimental weights have often drawn criticism, it has been hard to fault the top choices during the 1970s, with Rivn Ridge, Secretariat, Foolish Pleasure and Seattle Slew all winning the Kentucky Derby, and Honest Pleasure the betting favorite at post time in 1976, when he lost to Bold Forbes.

A Derby is always more interesting when horses arrive with reputations won on tracks in different sections of the country. Swaps vs. Nashua was the perfect example of that, and Tomy Lee vs. Sword Dancer, Silky Sullivan vs. Tim Tam and Majestic Prince vs. Arts and Letters were fascinating matchups, too. This year the good runners are spread out in a fashion guaranteed to make their development intriguing to watch. Balzac, a lightly raced son of Buckpasser trained by California's top money-winning conditioner, Charlie Whittingham, is on the Coast along with Affirmed. Balzac, too, has been unable to race so far this win-

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ter, but Whittingham says that he "is one of the very best young horses I have ever been associated with," and Whittingham never goes overboard on horses he trains. Forever Casting, who won seven of 16 starts last year, is wintering at Oaklawn Park in Hot Springs, Ark.

Alydar is the type of horse sure to stir interest, both because he runs from behind and also because he is owned by Calumet Farm. That stable hasn't won a Kentucky Derby since 1968, when Forward Pass was held to be the winner after Dancer's Image was disqualified, but still has won a record eight Derbies. Alydar also is trained by 32-year-old John Veitch, whose father, Syl, was inducted into racing's Hall of Fame last year. In the 1940s and 1950s Calumet won with the same consistency that the Yankees and Canadiens did. During the 1960s and '70s, however, Calumet fell on fallow times (in one year its winnings dipped below \$90,000), but it has bounced back with the fine 4-year-old filly Our Mims and Alydar.

"Alydar has a strange running style," Veitch says. "He throws his head to the right through the stretch. So far we haven't been able to figure out why he does it, but maybe he's looking around for horses to come up and challenge him. In his one race before the Flamingo he did it again, but he won just about as he pleased and did everything that was expected of him. He is bred [Raise a Native-Sweet Tooth by On-and-On] to run all day, and as the distances stretch out he should improve."

Calumet's owners, Admiral and Mrs. Gene Markey—he's 82, she's 81—are both in wheelchairs and have never seen either Our Mims or Alydar race. Veitch sends video tapes of the races to the Markeys. "But they have been out to the barn in the mornings to look at them," Veitch says. "When I was a youngster growing up on the racetrack, I remember Calumet Farm very well. At the time my father was training for C. V. Whitney and he had the second-strongest stable in the country through many of Cal-

umet's best years. I'd sit in the Whitney cottage at Belmont Park and watch Ben Jones ride out to the track on his pony. He'd have all those outstanding horses in training and they would go out to work out almost in waves. I got to look at those devil's-red and blue colors over and over again."

Two years ago the Markeys hired Veitch as their trainer. He had a small public stable at the time, and when he was asked to look over the Calumet stock he thought he was being "scouted" for the job but didn't really expect to get it. "Everyone would like to train for Calumet," he says. "It's got that excellent tradition behind it, and the Markeys care very deeply."

Calumet is most renowned for winning at Churchill Downs, but it has a storied past at Hialeah, too. And Veitch knows that this year the competition is going to be both keen and deep. The road to Churchill Downs may be a long, difficult one, but it should be an awful lot of fun.

END

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There's no stopping these locals

Boston University's city kids have led the top-ranked Terriers to a 23-1 record

The Boston University campus spreads over seven blocks of Commonwealth Avenue, split down the middle by MBTA trolley tracks. BU is the archetypal city school where homecomings are disregarded and student activities are Opening Day at Fenway

Park and a Rolling Stones concert at the Boston Garden. And although BU's hockey team has dominated the East in the '70s, winning two NCAA and five Eastern championships, Coach Jack Parker says, "On this campus a hockey player's no different from an obese player." In fact, until this season the Terriers were based at the box office of their on-campus, Walter A. Brown arena, selling out only once in the previous seven years.

Suddenly, however, BU has sold out its last six home games. This has nothing to do with the fact that the Terriers, a team with only three seniors, are 23-1 and rank with Denver University as the best team in the country. What has happened is that in Boston, where the city game is hockey not basketball, the city school has finally become the city team. For the first time in a decade, the BU lineup contains more Americans than Canadians. There are only four Canadians on the Terriers' 22-player roster of the four one has a brother and another a father who are BU graduates. And not only does BU skate 15 players who come from Massachusetts, but its five All-American candidates are also local kids.

"There's still none of that campus rub-rub, jock-worship stuff here," says Co-captain Jack O'Callahan, a junior defenseman who is one of three Terriers from the inner-city section of Charlestown. "A lot of the people who have started fol-

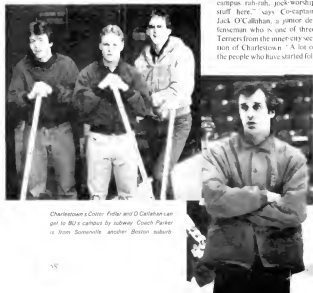
lowing us have nothing to do with BU. They're just hockey fans. People in this city suddenly have become really interested in local hockey players. It all started this fall when Bobby Miller made the Bruins. Everyone started talking about how a kid went from the local ranks of a Pee Wee and high school program in Billerica [a Boston suburb] to a local college [New Hampshire] and then right to the Bruins. Next thing you know, Miller's doing television commercials and people are saying, 'Hey, our kids can play hockey as well as anyone from Moose Jaw.' Now at our games there's a whole section of season ticket-holders from Charlestown. There's a group from the South Shore that follows David Silk. We've even got fans from Southie [South Boston] now, and we'll probably have more fans from Southie next season because I think we're going to get a couple of their good high school players."

When Parker played for BU in the late '60s he was in a minority. He was from Somerville, a 10-minute drive from BU, but his teams, as well as BU's 1971 and 1972 NCAA champions, were dominated by Canadians who had been recruited by Jack Kelley, now the general manager of the New England Whalers. Eight members of those championship teams reached the NHL or WHA—and all were Canadians. Now Boston University has one player in the NHL, Cleveland Baron Left Wing Mike Fidler, who hails from Charlestown.

"It's not that we stopped recruiting Canadians," says Parker. "We recruit the best kids we can, no matter where they're from. Jack Kelley had to recruit Canadians in order to keep the BU program healthy and competitive. Boston College used to wait until the papers published their high school All-State teams, then they'd pick up the phone and have five of the six kids committed to BC by noon. I was sick of that." When the All-State selections were announced last year, five of the six players on the first team had already agreed to attend BU.

As it turned out, that group of recruits included Fidler's younger brother Mark and Miller's younger brother Paul, both of whom immediately became BU regulars. Fidler, in fact, is BU's leading scorer with 21 goals and 31 assists. "We had lost our two all-time leading scorers and

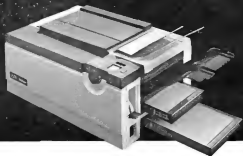
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Charlestown's Colter Fidler and O'Callahan can get to BU's campus by subway. Coach Parker is from Somerville, another Boston suburb

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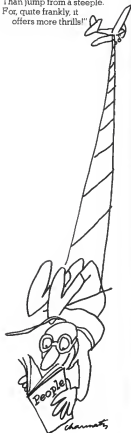
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COLLEGE HOCKEY *continued*

were depending on so many freshmen and sophomores to play key roles that we never dreamed we could get off to this kind of start," says Parker, whose Terrers won their first 21 games this season before losing to Yale 7-5 in college hockey's upset of the decade. "Of course, we haven't exactly blown a lot of teams out [eight wins have been by one goal, seven by two]. Indeed, only the dependable goaltending of Bryan Durocher, Leo the Lip's favorite great-nephew, and Jim Craig and some steady defense work by O'Callahan and Dick Lamby, the best pair in the East, if not the country, have kept BU on top.

O'Callahan is BU's first junior co-captain in 14 years, a bright, articulate kid whose first goal is not the NHL but law school. A strong, sure skater, O'Callahan also is tough, but everyone from Charles-town is tough. "What makes O'Callahan so good is that he's the most intense competitor I've ever seen," Parker says. O'Callahan shrugs off most questions about O'Callahan. "I almost went to Harvard or Brown," he says, "but I like the low-key atmosphere here. Who knows? This is a tough team, but at a rah-rah place we might all be ego cases."

Lamby transferred from Salem (Mass.) State to BU last year. He played for the 1976 U.S. Olympic team and has been selected for Team U.S.A. in the World Championship at Prague this spring. The 6'1", 195-pound Lamby is a heady puck-carrier who has scored 47 points in 21 games. One pro scout claims he is "the best physical talent in the East." Lamby's principal claim to fame, though, may be that he is the best hockey player to come out of the basketball-mad city of Worcester, Mass. "The best and the craziest," he adds.

While the pro scouts like O'Callahan and Lamby, both of whom have been drafted by teams in the NHL and the WHA, they drool over Silk, a 6', 180-pound sophomore right wing from the seacoast town of Scituate, Mass. At least he was from there—his home was destroyed last month by the terrible storm that ravaged New England. Silk, 20, most likely will be the first American picked in June's NHL amateur draft. That league's scouting bureau rates him "a surefire NHL player." Silk is a natural goal scorer. In 34 games as a freshman he had 35 goals, and he has scored 23 in 20 games this season. Silk is strong in the corners and makes such deft passes that several

scouts project him as a center in the pros.

"I don't think any BU player ever had a better freshman season than Silk," says Parker. "Not just because of his scoring ability, either. He's the best defensive forward I've ever coached." Like many of his teammates, Silk has good bloodlines; his grandfather, Hal Sanvinn, played on the last (1918) Red Sox world champions, and a cousin, Mike Milbury of Walpole, Mass., is a Bruins defenseman.

However, no BU player is more representative of the Boston bloodline than Mark Fidler. He has been called a phenom from the Bobby Orr League to Pee Wees to Maitagnon High School to BU. His oldest brother Joe, who skated at BC, plays forward for Phoenix of the Pacific Coast League. Mike moved right into the NHL after his sophomore season at BU. Mark, a 5'8" 180-pounder, is the collegiate counterpart of Bryan Trottier, the star center of the New York Islanders. "Mark's had a better freshman season than Mike did," Parker says. "He's absolutely incredible with the puck."

BU's success has hardly calmed the nerves of the 32-year-old Parker, who smokes four packs of cigarettes a day. Parker took over BU in the 1973-74 season and led the Terrers to the Eastern championship. He also won the Eastern title in 1975 and 1976, and has 114-28-2 career record is the best in NCAA history in terms of percentage. Nonetheless, Parker says, "As good as our record is this season, it means nothing if we don't win the ECACs and the NCAAAs."

This year one of Parker's major problems has been to get his players together for practice. Boston has been snowed in several times, making transportation and communication almost impossible. While school was closed during the big storm, most of the BU players killed time at The Dugout, an underground bar on Commonwealth Avenue that has long been home away from home for the school's athletes. At one point, power along Commonwealth Avenue was lost for 12 hours, and as a result O'Callahan and Durocher, who are part-time bartenders, had to tend The Dugout's bar by candlelight. Fed up with the blackout, Boston Globe reporter Joe Concannon turned to Durocher and joked, "Can't you do something about this?"

Durocher threw his arms heavenward. The lights flickered back on. In Boston, when you're 23-1 and the city team, the Lord is on your side.

END

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It was fortunate for Columbus that the rules and strange workings of the Southern Ocean Racing Conference were not in effect back in 1492. Had they been, little Niña probably would have been protested as unworthy before the Pillars of Hercules were down behind her. Pinta quite possibly would have been protested and disqualified for not leaving the Canaries to starboard. At her arrival off Watlings Island in the Bahamas, the Santa Maria would probably have been declared a nonwinner by the Arawak Indian Yacht Club because she failed to sail to her rating upwind.

There also is quite a financial similarity between Columbus' venture and the six-race series of the Southern Ocean Racing circuit which ended last week in the waters he first explored. To finance Columbus, Queen Isabella hooked her jewels, and in her lifetime Spain got scant return. So it is every year on the Southern Ocean circuit: the boat owners put up a bundle and for it get a taste of glory and silver mementos—the bulk of the profit going in time to designers, builders, sail-cutters and other entrepreneurs.

For example, in the series-opening race, a 130-miler from St. Petersburg to Boca Grande, Fla. and back, one of the entries was *Circus Maximus*, an ultralight, wooden-shelled bomb costing at least \$175,000 and designed specifically to go like blazes off the wind. Although she got her kind of wind for half the Boca race, she ended up 68th in fleet rankings, and in the next three races came in 72nd, 47th and 73rd. In her final attempt before resirring—the 193-mile test from Miami to Nassau by way of Fort Lauderdale—with frontal weather giving her a chance to reach and run, *Circus Maximus* finished 30th. By that time she had earned a variety of nicknames, among them, "Circus Minimus" and "Honey-mooner," the latter suggesting that her best hope for a win might be in a race over Niagara Falls.

To understand the scoring and whimsical

rules as applied on the SORC, one needs the genius of a master statistician and the sort of patience gentle Alice displayed in her encounter with the Mad Hatter. For reasons no one seems able to explain, *Super Jay II*, a \$23,000, Class D "stocker" owned and skippered by Jack Judges of Canada, fairly and squarely completed the Boca Grande race (in which five flashier and more costly hulls lost their masts and six others failed to finish), but does not appear on the final scoring list. Inspector Clouseau, another Class D boat that did not start in any race, does appear, placing 21st, one notch ahead of *Robin Too II*, which did compete. How can a boat that does not race beat one that does? Who knows?

Before the six-race series was over, the same sort of vagaries that cast poor *Super Jay II* into oblivion were affecting some of the very elite in the racing fleet, notably, *Love Machine*, *Infinity*, *William*, *Mr. Jumpa* and *Evergreen*—boats that represented much of the best of yesterday and today. In the Boca Grande race, a Class C English boat named *Marionette*, from last summer's winning Admiral's Cup team, broke her mast. For the past two years a boat that does not finish has been awarded the placement of last in fleet. Such a penalty makes it virtually impossible for a nonfinisher to win series honors in either class or fleet. Noel Coon, the American who chartered *Marionette* this year, had raced a smaller boat in 1977 under the same scoring system. Last year, when he did not suffer a dismasting, he had no objections. This year, when his boat lost the spar, he felt the rules should be reinterpreted, merely scoring a DNF as last in class, not last in fleet. Three races after his dismasting, he filed a written protest to that effect and, incredibly, the race jury upheld it.

The merits of the case are immaterial: in football and Indian hand wrestling, in sailing or any kind of game, you do not reinterpret the rules in the middle of the competition—and you certainly do not



Academy bear Tenebrous to capture Class A

make the change retroactive. If her rivals had known a change of scoring would suddenly put the very capable *Marionette* back in contention, some of them might have played their hands differently. Under the rescoring, *Love Machine* held first place comfortably, but *Infinity* was pushed down to third and *Evergreen* finished out of the money. Because the jury did not reach its decision until almost 24 hours after the last race, there were a number of unhappy sailors, some silent, some cussing.

Largely because of misunderstandings all around, the closest fight for class honors generated the most heat. Through the whole series in Class D, *Mr. Jumpa*, a New Zealand one-tonner up for sale to John Wysocki, a Massachusetts plastic surgeon, battled against a somewhat similar laminated one-tonner, *Rogues Roost*, designed and skippered by Bill Cook of Connecticut. After two races, *Rogues Roost* led by two points; after the third, the two boats were tied; after the fourth, it was *Mr. Jumpa* by 1.5.

Feeling that the fore and aft trim of his rival seemed to warrant a higher rating, Cook filed a protest the day after the fourth race, requesting remeasurement of that particular. Somehow it was not done before the Miami-Nassau race. On the first fair day after that event, John Wysocki sat aboard his boat much of the

continued

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BOATING continued

morning waiting for a measurer, or a committeeman, or somebody. Meanwhile, the measurer had posted a notice on the official SORC bulletin board at the Nassau Yacht Club requesting that he be contacted about measuring. Because the bulletin board was a good mile from Mr. Jumpy's mooring and because there were plenty of bars closer by, the failure of any of Mr. Jumpy's crew to make it to the Nassau Yacht Club is understandable, if not excusable.

Whatever the failure by whomsoever, by late afternoon the wind was up too high for easy measuring, and so was the irritation level of several of Mr. Jumpy's crew. When the measurer, a one-time third-string Georgia Tech quarterback named Bunky Helfrich, showed up with protesting skipper Bill Cook, they were greeted by strong, vibrating language. During the contretemps, the irritation of a few members of Mr. Jumpy's crew—New Zealanders unaccustomed to the casual whimsy of the SORC—increased when it was discovered that no record of Mr. Jumpy's rating certificate was on file with the race committee. Jumpy's men had given a copy to a measurer in Clearwater, Fla. He did not remember receiving it. Unless a certificate could be produced or a jury convinced that the crew had done its best to deliver one, Jumpy would be disqualified from the whole series. Because of all the hoo-ha, both the measuring of Mr. Jumpy and the decision as to her eligibility without papers was postponed until after the final race, the Nassau Cup, which was sailed over a truncated Olympic-style course of 26.5 miles. Going to weather, reaching and running, Mr. Jumpy and Rogues Roost scrapped it out, crossing the finish not a boat length apart, the latter winning by 18 seconds on corrected time.

Curiously, the cloud under which Mr. Jumpy sailed the last race spread over the Class B leader, Williwaw, skippered by the world's best competitive sailor, Dennis Conner, who had Class B honors comfortably sucked away. Because the division title goes to the skipper who makes the highest score against his class rivals, Williwaw had a 2.5-point lead over the next-best class leader, the now-provisional Mr. Jumpy. Ironically, if the jury threw Mr. Jumpy out, even if Williwaw took her class she would end up in a tie with Rogues Roost, each boat having five wins and a second. In that case, because such ties are broken by reckoning the

margin each class winner has over the second best in her class, *Rogues Roost* would take the division title.

In Class A, the only group whose scoring was not mucked up by jury room wrangling, Ted Turner on his beloved antique, *Tenacious*, lost to the brand-new *Acadia*, a beauty driving through the sloppy seas and moderate air prevalent during the series. It didn't hurt that *Acadia* had one Aussie aboard, Lee Killingworth, formerly of the America's Cup challenger *Australia*, and one sailmaker, Olympic medalist John Marshall. *Acadia's* owner, Burt Keenan, and the rest of the crew are middle-aged Louisiana boys. Notable among them are Buddy Friedrichs, the 1968 Olympic Dragon tist, and John Danc, a Sears and Soling winner. The Southern homogeneity of the *Acadia* crew harks back a dozen years, when Turner and his good old boys first unsettled the Yankee Establishment at the SORC the way Jeb Stuart did when he rode around McClellan. But the similarity is only superficial.

Unlike Turner, Keenan is a quiet man; his *Acadia* crew does all the talking—lots of it. It is not true, as reported, that in the heat of one of their arguments while readying *Acadia*, they were thrown out of a restaurant in Bradenton, Fla. They never left the restaurant; the other guests did. John Marshall, the Connecticut sailmaker, observed, "Those guys can produce results in an easygoing way. All the talk can drive you up the wall until you realize they really know how to make a boat move."

Twenty-four hours after the last race, most of the ruckus had calmed. Mr. Jumpy was measured and found to be as rated. The jury decided that the loss of certificate was not the crew's fault, so Mr. Jumpy held her first place in class, and *Williwaw* thereby became the division champion.

But there were still a few loose ends. In the first scoring list, a boat named *Ar-jeto* went unreported, although she was plainly seen to start with her Class B rivals. Another hull was clocked at the finish, although several rivals said she was not in the race.

A boat went unscored. Boats that never raced were placed. A boat that started did not finish. One that did not race did finish. To judge by it all, it should be no surprise next year if the ill-fated *Mary Deane* showed up and saved her time on the whole fleet.

END

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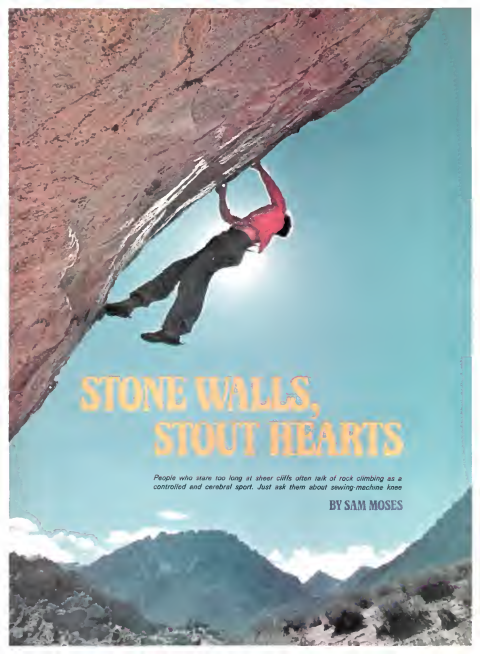
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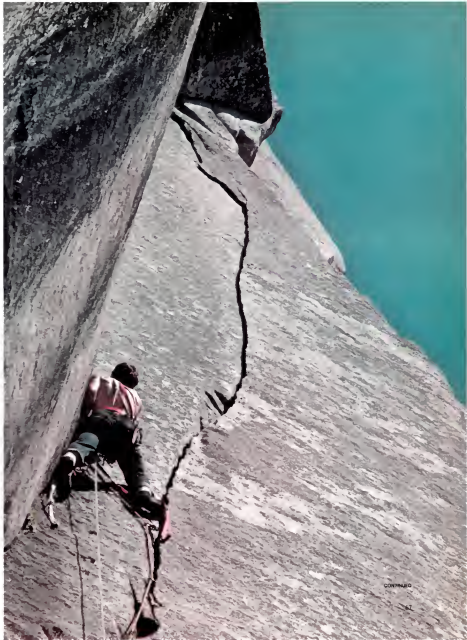
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STONE WALLS, STOUT HEARTS

People who stare too long at sheer cliffs often talk of rock climbing as a controlled and cerebral sport. Just ask them about sewing-machine knee

BY SAM MOSES



CONTINUED



It is not unusual to see rock climbers hanging around the valley in Yosemite National Park, peering through binoculars for hours on end at the half-mile-high canyon walls. If two rock climbers are shoulder to shoulder, eventually one will say to the other, without taking his eyes from the eyepieces, "There's a route." Such a cryptic conclusion to an afternoon of staring will sound anticlimactic to any tourists within earshot, but the other climber will know exactly what the first one means. He might reply, "No chance, there's nothing there." The first climber might not say anything more, but an imaginary line zigzagging up the face of the wall will be stuck in his mind like a recurring dream, and as he goes back to the valley with the binoculars, again and again, maybe for weeks, the line will grow until it reaches the sky at the top of the wall. From bottom to top, ground to sky, over and over, the climber will traverse that line in his mind until he can picture every inch of it on the bedroom ceiling when he's lying awake at night, thinking about climbing the wall.

Eventually he might convince his friend that there actually is a climbable route on the wall and they will go for it. The line becomes a reality to the climbers. If it should prove to be a false route, if the line should end, if it should fade away at 1,000 feet, they will fail. But if it is a good route, and if they are good climbers, they will move up the rock face with a fluid grace, the leader performing a slow-motion ballet to music that only he hears, to a routine he choreographs on the face of the canyon wall one step at a time. It may take three or four days and nights for the climbers to reach the top, but if they do, and if it is in fact a first ascent—a route no one has climbed before—they will be struck with a strange and powerful sense of satisfaction and accomplishment that will be part of them for the rest of their lives.

The question pondered by climbers far more than "Why?"—climbers leave that one to etologists—is "Why not?" Take a board 12 inches wide and place it on the ground. Many of us could do pirouettes on the board without stepping off. Now put that board across a ravine 100 feet deep and watch what happens: insecurity causes us to be terrified of trying to do so much as crawl across the board. We know it is a simple act, yet we cannot do it. We have, in effect, lost control of ourselves. Which proves? That it's all in the head. Climbers refer to the ability to control oneself as "mental balance."

Climbers tend to give considerable thought to mental balance. Perhaps they think about it too much, but a lack of mental balance can cause even expert climbers to blow moves high on the face of a wall that they could make blindfolded were they near the ground. Good climbers deal with climbing from a mental standpoint rather than from a physical one. Look at it this way: a climber's physical balance on the face of a canyon wall may be precarious, but his mental balance must, by necessity, be as close to perfect as it may ever have to be in his life. "Almost" falling doesn't count; almost losing a solid sense of control of yourself when you're 1,000 feet above the ground and gripping a rock with little more than your fingernails counts for everything.

Many climbers contend that both the challenge and the reward of climbing lie in the problems, and their solutions. And in fact, rock climbing does appeal to people with mechanical and technical minds, professional problem solvers such as scientists, engineers, even psychologists. A climber may be temporarily stymied at any point on the face of a cliff (the problem), and he may spend as much as half an hour at that spot, searching the rock around him for footholds and fingerholds, weighing the possibilities of body po-

sitions for his next move, running each through his head (the solving process). He might attempt four or five different moves before he finds one that works; when he does find it, there is a strong feeling of both relief and satisfaction. It's not unlike the feeling one gets from balancing a checkbook after an hour of juggling numbers.

But rock climbing also requires a continuum: one correct solution is not enough. In that respect it is more like a chess game. In chess, a player may pay for the wrong move three or four moves later because he had committed himself. The same situation exists in rock climbing. A climber must plan his moves ahead, so as not to climb himself into checkmate, because there is usually no backtracking. Climbing down is more difficult than climbing up.

One climber tells this story of a deflating revelation: "I live in a third floor apartment, and the other day I bought a 60-inch oak schoolteacher's desk at an auction. I had to carry it up to my apartment alone, up a narrow staircase, and I found myself challenged by this task the same way I am challenged by rock climbing. First, it was physically difficult; I had to use my strength and energy carefully, not waste an ounce. But mostly, I found myself engaged in the same sort of problem solving that I find in rock climbing. Before I moved the desk around each corner, I had to consider every option, because the desk was such a tight fit that only one way would work. Should I tilt the desk on its side and pivot it, or should I put it in the doorway upside down and flip it?"—that sort of thing. I had to find the best leverage points, and I had to decide each move in advance—no wrong moves or the desk might get wedged. When I finally got the desk to my apartment, I felt the same sort of satisfaction I feel when I reach the top of a climb.

"That bothered me. I thought to myself, 'Is that all there is to rock climbing?' Moving furniture! If that's the case, all I have to do is get a job as a piano mover and I wouldn't have to go to the mountains every weekend."

Climbing rocks is more involved than moving furniture, of course. There are two basic ways to tackle an ascent. There is free climbing and there is aid climbing. A free climber will not support or assist himself with any artificial device, although he will protect himself by anchoring his rope to the rock in case he falls. An aid climber will use any tool it takes to get to the top, including pitons, the steel spikes that can be pounded into the rock.

Ten years ago pitons were standard equipment; today they are spurned and scorned by many climbers because of the ecological and esthetic damage they cause to the "vertical wilderness," as climbers are fond of calling their rocks and mountains. Pitons are almost always left behind in the wall, and the leftover pitons reduce the challenge of finding a route; when a path is marked by tiny metal signposts from a previous climb, the problem of which route to take is $\frac{1}{2}$ solved. Also, rusty old pitons take some of the insularity out of climbing; they rudely remind a climber that

someone has been there before and has already done what he is doing—sometimes decades earlier. Such reminders may keep a climber humble, but they spoil the fun.

In climbing areas today, the sound of a hammer banging a piton into the rock is met with angry shouts by other climbers. Nowadays climbers prefer devices called chocks—aluminum blocks, varying from fingertip- to fist-sized with holes for ropes—and runners, or nylon slings. The chocks can be wedged into natural cracks in the rock, the runners are looped over rock nubs; both of them anchor the nylon safety rope via a carabiner, which is an aluminum clip shaped like a giant safety pin.

The leader of a climbing party places the chocks for protection, and the last man on the rope removes them as he follows, thus the face of the rock is left unscarred, and there will be no trace of any previous climbing activity to deflate the spirit of the next party. The use of chocks instead of pi-

continued



tons is called clean climbing. (The British, especially Scotsmen, who were active in rock climbing long before Americans, are passionate believers in climbing clean.) While considered as secure as pitons, chocks seem to generate more thoughtful climbing because they demand greater awareness of rock textures. The climber must face reality; he can't hammer himself into security. It is sometimes said of a climber who carries pitons, even as a backup, "He carries his courage in a racksack."

Pitons, as well as chocks with names like rups and bugaboos, may be used on aid climbs, along with all sorts of specialized contrivances, strange bits of ironmongery called jumars, blobbies, smashies, bashies, skyhooks, cliffhangers and copperheads. Virtually all the big walls—roughly defined as those requiring more than one day to climb—are aid climbs, so the best climbers are experienced at aid climbing as well as free climbing.

Shill, since a difficult aid climb often turns out to be more of an engineering than a mental or physical exercise, aid climbing is looked upon as somewhat impure. It would be accurate enough to say that aid climbing begins where free climbing leaves off, but it would not be entirely fair. It would be like saying bicycle riding begins where running leaves off. Royal Robbins, the preeminent Yosemite big-wall climber of the '60s, puts the ethical dilemma of aid climbing into perspective in his book *Advanced Rockcraft*. "Technology in climbing is both a blessing and a curse," he writes. "It expands the limits of the possible but robs us of adventure. Since it is technology which makes anything in rock climbing possible, it is technology which we must selectively reject in order to have limits to the possible, for without limits there is no game."

Yvon Chouinard, an American climber renowned for his brilliance in developing and inventing climbing tools, quotes Albert Einstein, who, though speaking on a different subject, touched on the same ethical issue: "A perfection of means, and confusion of aims, seems to be our main problem."

Some climbers, especially older ones, are as disciplined in their style as they are in rejecting the temptations of technical aids. It is not always enough to get to the top, the climb should be made with grace and with adherence to an unwritten—and sometimes confusing—climbing ethos. It's very much like high diving: anyone with enough courage and coordination can dive from a 10-meter platform, but executing a graceful swan dive from that platform is far more difficult—and rewarding. Climbers are always striving for the graceful. Royal Robbins, who is also legendary for his unshakable self-control in scary situations and for his uncompromising approach to style, says, "The only kind of climbing that is ultimately worthwhile demands a spiritual effort that is sometimes agonizing. . . . Just getting up a route is nothing: the way it is done is everything."

A sloppy climber is not taken seriously by his peers, and contrary to the popular conception, muscling one's way up a rock with one's arms and shoulders is the trait of a sloppy climber. It is much more smooth and efficient to push the body up with the legs. Although climbers often have physiques like gymnasts, with great upper-body strength, it is

the legs that give a clue to their style. A climber with big biceps and only average-sized calves will most likely be awkward on the rock; the best climbers have clearly defined calf muscles.

Women generally have better bodies for climbing than men, and are often more natural climbers because they must rely on technique rather than brute strength. And their suppleness is an asset; the most common climbing injury is a dislocated shoulder, a result of the contorted positions a climber often finds himself in. The ideal body for a rock climber would be that of a 14-year-old girl, about 5' 8" tall, with the shoulders of a channel swimmer and the legs of a hurdler.

One of the best women climbers—some say the very best—is Beverly Johnson. At 18, Johnson was a debutante in Arlington, Va., a fact she never volunteers and only concedes with an embarrassed roll of the eyes—the expression people adopt when they recall the silly things they did when they were young. She was a fire fighter in Yosemite for three seasons, a job she took to be near the big walls.

Johnson, who is now 30, led the first all-woman ascent of Yosemite's intimidating El Capitan. She has seen two men die attempting that wall: one, climbing above her, almost hit her when he fell; on another occasion, she helped carry down the body of a climber who was killed. She has also lost a female friend climbing. In 1975 Diana Hunter—an excellent climber who was a perfect example of ability through grace rather than strength—was killed in a fall in Colorado's Rocky Mountain National Park.

"Rocks make no compromise for sex," says Johnson. "Rock climbing is not like some sports, where it is somehow made easier for women, or sports like, say, softball, which is only baseball for soft people. On a rock, everything is equal."

Everything may be equal between men, or between men and women, but not always between men and rock. Some climbers, in their pursuit of satisfaction, set their standards so high that the result is an edge for the rock. Some climbers feel a climb has been too easy if they haven't missed at least one move, which frequently means falling. There is a motorcycle-racing axiom: "If you haven't fallen off once or twice in a season, then you ain't trying hard enough." Some would apply the axiom to climbing.

But there are also climbers who feel that one rarely falls unless he has overstepped his ability or gotten careless. To such people, a fall is considered the result of misjudgment, or worse, losing control of oneself, or worst of all, foolhardiness, which is considered to be just about the cardinal sin of mountaineering.

The difference in viewpoints with regard to falling seems to lie somewhere in the climber's attitude toward danger. Roger Breedlove, a former climbing guide at the Yosemite School of Mountaineering, says, "I don't think many regular climbers are turned on by danger, although danger may be something that starts people climbing. You hear a lot about it in beginners' classes—people get a thrill out of it, they really get a charge out of being scared. They're truly terrified. It's odd, because when most good guides see this, they think, 'I got to find a way to calm this guy down, to get him off the rock, to get him out of this class, to make

continued

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him feel better." Then afterwards the guy feels elated. That seems to me to be perverse. I don't know any climbers who climb often and climb well who have ever expressed that sort of elation. If a climber gets terrified—and they occasionally do—afterwards he won't say or feel much more than it was a lousy day."

Rock climbing is by nature an existential act: the only risks a climber faces are those he chooses to take. Most climbers don't actually believe their sport is dangerous, because they feel they control the degree of risk. Climbers generally think hang-glider pilots are crazy, and they have a point: a hang-glider pilot tosses his fate to the wind, as it were. And other, similar comparisons may be drawn: an automobile racer is at the mercy of mechanical things such as wheel lugs; a mountain climber is at the mercy of the weather. A rock climber is at the mercy of nothing but himself.

Climbers recognize how easy it is to make mistakes, however. Says Breedlove, "Good climbers like the idea of making difficult moves away from their protection. I don't think that's from a desire for danger. Taking that risk signifies to a climber that he is confident and in control, that he's quite capable of making challenging moves."

In motor racing, if, during a race, a driver thinks about the risk he is taking, he is inviting disaster, because his mind is not where it must be. On the face of a cliff, however, a climber's concentration does not have to be so unremitting: there is time for reflection—but there is a caveat. It is tempting, especially to an inexperienced climber, to squander that time.

When a climber faces a difficult or dangerous move, he often uses the time to build up his courage or psych himself. It is during these moments that a climber is most likely to get scared, if he's ever going to. He might be struck by an attack of something climbers call "sewing-machine knee," a malady wherein one knee jerks uncontrollably up and down. It often occurs if the leg is tired or is being stretched. And it afflicts the best of climbers; fear is not necessarily involved. The only cure for sewing-machine knee is to take a deep breath, talk yourself back into relaxation, and maybe push on the knee in frustration until it stops quivering—although rarely is a hand free for such use.

During precarious seconds such as this, times when the climber is stuck, reality sinks in like a boulder tossed into a lake—"I really do not want to attempt this move, but it's impossible to turn around." The longer the climber stalls, the greater the likelihood he will look down at the ground and ask himself what the hell he is doing up there. When climbers say theirs is a lonely pursuit, this is what they are talking about. But, like some animals when cornered, the climber knows the only solution is to fight—to climb on. And he usually does. Once in a while, climbers do become paralyzed with fear or reluctance or indecision, in which case they must either be rescued or somehow rappel down, which most likely will also require assistance.

The emotional low that comes from this sort of failure is the worst. The pits. However, the high that comes from overcoming such situations and reaching the top of a challenging cliff is one of singular euphoria. This high is very dif-

ficult to describe because it is so intensely personal; it affects people differently. Sometimes it is slight, sometimes it is strong but subtle, sometimes a climber can float away on it.

Climbers disagree over just what this high feels like, and what it means—and what it's worth. It can almost become an addiction. "You don't feel the high every time," says one veteran. "You don't expect it, you don't even look for it, but you know it's there, and you know what you have to do to get it."

One neophyte climber describes the first time he ever felt the high: "It was after about my seventh or eighth climb. I was with a guy much better than me, and he thought it would be a good idea if I tackled something over my head, just so I wouldn't get cocky, because I had been progressing really fast. He felt I needed the experience of failing, to sort of bring me back to reality. So he put me on this expert route. It wasn't a long climb, maybe only 75 feet, but it was straight up, with only a few tiny nubs for holds. He looped the rope over a rock at the top and belayed me from the ground. It took me three attempts to get over the crux, the most difficult move, but I made it all the way to the top. The guy couldn't believe it.

"At the top I just kind of went, 'Whew, that was pretty good.' I knew I had made a move or two far more difficult than anything I had ever done before. Reaching the top wasn't exactly an anticlimax, but I didn't feel especially high—until late that evening as I lay in bed. It was a delayed reaction. The next morning when I woke up, I felt so terrific I whooped when I got out of bed. Nothing special happened that day—I can't even remember what I did—but I do know it somehow was the best day I had all year, no exaggeration. The high lasted for a few more days; every time I thought about climbing that rock I broke into a big grin."

Veteran climbers find it increasingly difficult to experience such moods; the more they climb, the more it takes to turn them on. Loid Price, who is the head of the Yosemite Mountaineering School, says, "Most climbers stay gung-ho for only about three years. I call a three-year period a generation because they come and go so fast. Three years is the average period of rapid improvement, which is not that much different from a lot of other sports, but with climbing there is so much more emphasis on the challenge. When a climber doesn't improve so fast, the challenge is lost."

A quarterback feels terrific when he throws a perfect 50-yard pass, and he will probably feel just as good if he throws another perfect 50-yard pass in the next game. The climber would need a 51-yard pass in the next game to feel so good again. Although this is far from a perfect analogy, it helps explain why first ascents are so cherished. Nothing contributes more to the high than for a climber to be able to say, "I did something no one on the face of this earth has ever done before."

Climbing is a non-competitive sport. There is no such thing as a climbing contest, and if one were suggested, climbers would surely consider such a thing preposterous—a prostitution of their sport—and scoff. But climbers are not non-competitive people; it's just that their competitive juices must be kept in check by the harsh verities of their pursuit. Two men on the same climb cannot compete against each

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other for very long without disastrous results. But when a climber's competitiveness is unleashed, remarkable things happen. In Yosemite, for example, first ascents are often attacked by climbers with the same sort of lust some hunters have for big game. A few climbers even try to set speed records on the big walls, an insane approach that undermines most of the objectives of climbing.

One of the paradoxes of climbing is that because there is no direct competition, the goals become more abstract and climbers often push themselves even further than they might if they were facing a rival. A climber has to define his own goals, and he continually doubts whether he has made them challenging enough. He may look in climbing like target shooting—if he hits 10 of 10, then maybe the target was too close. At the top of a cliff, the climber will often ask himself, "Did I really earn the right to feel this good?"

Roger Breedlove recently quit serious climbing because it lost meaning for him; he couldn't feel high no matter how well he climbed. Breedlove is 27 and had an intense affair with climbing for 11 years. He knew it was time to quit when he found himself on the face of El Capitan—a wall that had been tempting him from the very first moment he laid eyes on it years before—feeling indifferent about whether or not he made it to the top. He still isn't sure why he suddenly became so dispirited. Even more bewildering to him is why the sudden loss of heart occurred when it did, in the middle of the most exciting climb of his life.

"For four years I had wanted very badly to climb the west face of El Cap by myself," he recalls. "It is a very difficult route; a fellow had gotten killed there the year before. I climbed the first half of the route in about a day and a half. I was climbing very well, very quickly, climbing better than I ever had in my life. I was extremely confident. But it had no meaning for me at all. I was living out this fantasy that had been so important to me for four years, and I found myself thinking about things I'd rather be doing. It was very hard to be by myself up there; I couldn't take being by myself in those circumstances. I thought, 'I'll get to the top and it will be a cheap thrill, a truly cheap thrill, and I'll get nothing out of it. I'm already climbing well enough

that getting to the top is not going to prove I'm climbing any better. All I'll get when I reach the top is a headline, a pat on the back from a lot of people and an introduction tag at parties: This is Roger Breedlove; he solved the west face of El Cap! That image pretty much cinched it for me. So I turned around and rappelled back down. Even though it was hard for me, that was a good time to quit. Just quit cold."

Breedlove does not argue with those who suggest he copped out. He concedes that it is not entirely honest to say to yourself, "I know I can do it, so why bother?" when, in fact, you don't know you can do anything until you actually do it. It is very easy, sometimes even smug, for one to predict how he might feel after doing something before he does it.

Breedlove was a climbing bum, as in ski bum, or surf bum. Many climbing bums manage to live on as little as \$2,000 a year. They may teach climbing to support their habit and stay near the rocks, but a climbing guide doesn't earn much. It is not a satisfactory way to make a living; it is a summer job at best. It sounds to many like such a romantic way of life, but climbers don't think it particularly romantic at all.

In the foreword to *Climbing in North America*, Lito Tejada-Flores says, "The American climber has always been a maverick, often an eccentric, at times a virtual social outcast."

Breedlove's opinions on the personalities of American climbers are even stronger.

"Anybody who has an inkling of what goes into climbing probably has a great deal of respect for climbers," he says. "But not many people do, because climbers don't look respectable, not in the way they dress, the way they live. Climbers are generally far removed from anything neater than a pair of clean khakis. They don't look like they could do anything that requires any special talent. Most of them have a real iconoclastic sense to them. They won't knuckle under. They don't feel there's any higher power than themselves. They don't believe in anything. They create their own world and their own kinds of rules."

"As a group they tend to be interested in no other sports than climbing, although some of them are, or have been, gymnasts. They're not dedicated athletes.

Their diets are normally atrocious because most of them don't have enough money to be particularly fussy about what they eat. Physical conditioning is merely a means to an end for them; they only stay in shape because of the climbing. If they didn't climb, I'm not so sure they wouldn't be in poor shape. They're not team players, and they don't care about winning. Most of them are a little crazy—probably maladjusted—would be a better word to describe them. There are a lot of alienated intellectuals climbing."

"If 10 climbers could hear me right now, eight of them would scoff. They would say, 'Man, what a wooden bastard he is. We just climb for fun.' But where does that lead you? What is fun? Why is it fun? I don't believe people climb for fun; that's too crazy an answer. Climbing's not fun; it's too much work to be fun."

"It may be presumptuous of me to try to explain what makes other people climb, but I think climbing is something only somebody fairly smart could do, not because you have to be so smart to climb up a rock, but because you have to understand yourself enough to appreciate climbing as a method of expressing dissatisfaction with things. They may not consciously recognize it, but climbers have had to say to themselves, 'I need this. I need to go off and do this very personal thing. It's meaningless, it's not going to get me a job, people even may look down on me for it, but it's what I need right now.'"

Climbers were regarded as riffraff by the Yosemite Park and Curry Co.—the organization that provides most of the visitors' services—until 1969, the year Yosemite acknowledged the popularity and legitimacy of the sport by establishing the mountaineering school. "It's nice that today a climber is somewhat respected," says Breedlove. "Now you can introduce yourself as a climber. Fifteen years ago you didn't."

They may be able to introduce themselves as climbers, but they still don't like to. For one thing, they don't need to; their egos do not seem to require the adulation, the looks from others that say, "My, aren't you brave." Says George Willig, the man who climbed Manhattan's World Trade Center. "If a man

wants to be famous, rock climbing isn't the way to do it. That's the wrong motivation, because when a climber starts competing with something other than himself, he loses touch with how to deal with certain situations on the cliffs. When a man gets into a tricky situation, he has to know exactly how he wants to overcome it and what he's willing to do to overcome it. A desire for glory gets in the way of that effort."

A lot of climbers will find it ironic that those words come from Willig, who is the most famous rock climber ever, although it was hardly a rock he climbed. The reaction to Willig among hard-core climbers ranges from indifference to downright bitterness; few climbers have cheered him. Following his Trade Center climb the July-August issue of *Climbing* magazine ran a facetious, first-person account of a climb up a brick wall, written with enough sarcastic references to suggest a put-down of Willig.

Climbers are a guarded, closemouthed lot, and in most cases prefer to downplay their accomplishments—even first ascents. There are many superb climbers around the country whom few people, even other climbers, have ever heard of. This alone largely explains the general mood of disdain among climbers for Willig's activities after his Trade Center ascent (in October he climbed the Bastille in Colorado's Eldorado Springs Canyon for live television). But another reason climbers are wary of publicity is that they are protective of their rock-climbing areas to the point of paranoia, and they regard publicity of any kind as anathema to the sport—let alone massive publicity for the climbing of an artificial structure. Willig is perfectly aware of this, and he is very careful not to reveal specifically where he climbs.

No climbers are more mum about their area than those who frequent the seven-mile ridge in New York's Shawangunk Mountains that offers the best climbing in the East. (Most climbers feel Yosemite is already lost to the tourists.) Shawangunk climbers don't talk to strangers much. Jerry Hewitt, a frequent climber there, says, "I hung around the 'Gunks a week before I found anyone who would climb with me. It took a long climb to crack those climbers."

Part of what the climbers see as the problem with the Shawangunks is their

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STONE WALLS continued

accessibility. The range is barely a two-hour drive from New York City; the cliffs touch ground just a stone's throw from a road. On summer weekends, climbers park their cars and vans next to the road, and camp in the woods. Trucks sell hot dogs, sausages, honey, lobsters and clams. Tourists from the city often stop and stare up at the climbers, oohing and aahing between bites of their sausages.

Although the Shawangunks are a relatively small cataract of gray cliffs, nowhere near as awesome as Yosemite's walls—the highest Shawangunk climbs are no more than 350 feet—there is a great variety of climbs. The guide book, which is currently out of print, includes 393 routes, and many of them are white-knucklers. One local who moved to the area just for the climbing, tensing his body as he speaks, says, "There's stuff up there that will eat you alive."

Being eaten is hardly what climbers fear, however. H. L. Mencken once observed of hot-air balloonists, "They have an unsurpassed view of the scenery, but there is always the possibility that it may collide with them." And so it is with rock climbers. Again, Royal Robbins is the voice of rationality on the subject of colliding with the scenery. And in two eloquent, lucid paragraphs, he fairly sums up what rock climbing is all about:

"If we are keenly alert and aware of the rock and what we are doing on it, if we are honest with ourselves and our capabilities and weaknesses, if we avoid committing ourselves beyond what we know is safe, then we will climb safely. For climbing is an exercise in reality. He who sees it clearly is on safe ground, regardless of his experience or skill. But he who sees reality as he would like it to be, may have his illusions rudely stripped from his eyes when the ground comes up fast.

"We are, of course, all mixtures of sanity and folly, of clear vision and murky romanticism. Such conflicts are a mark of the human condition. And we climb because we are human. The rock is a field of battle between our weakness and our strength. We wouldn't touch rock if we were perfectly self-controlled. And he who would climb and live must continuously wage this battle and never let folly win. It's an outrageously demanding proposition. But I never said it was easy."

END



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HEAVYWEIGHT THEORY

Sir

Before the Muhammad Ali-Leon Spinks fight, I half-jokingly told some friends about my boxing theory, i.e., that every eight years the Olympic Games produce a world heavyweight champion. Now that the theory has proved true, I'm in shock. Here are the facts:

In 1952 Floyd Patterson won an Olympic gold medal and then went on to become world heavyweight champion.

In 1960, eight years later, Cassius Clay won a gold and went on to become the champ.

In 1968 George Foreman won a gold and afterward won the heavyweight title.

In 1976 Leon Spinks won a gold, and now he is wearing the heavyweight crown.

Keep an eye on the American boxers who win gold medals in 1984!

KLYNN R. DEVO
Eglin AFB, Fla.

• You might watch 1980, as well. Joe Frazier won a gold medal in 1964.—ED

CARDINAL SINS

Sir

St. Louis Cardinal owner Bill Bidwill should get rid of Terry Metcalf (*He Don't Get No Respect from His Cardinals*, Feb. 20). Not that Metcalf isn't a good player, he is when he hangs on to the ball. And who can blame Bidwill for trading Conrad Dobler? You say Dobler got "only \$55,000" last year. How many penalties did he incur? And how about the game against Miami last Thanksgiving when Dobler threw a tantrum, got into a fight and generally acted like a child? Does someone who behaves like that deserve \$55,000 a year? Hats off to Bidwill for treating spoiled brats like spoiled brats, and to Joe Marshall for a fine, interesting article.

MICHAEL C. RHIAN
Trout Run, Pa.

Sir

"Poor Bill Bidwill!" Nuts! Poor fans.

TERRY PINNELL
Knoxville, Tenn.

Sir

Don Coryell is a complex coach and a complex man but he could do no less after the Dec. 10 loss to Washington than let his long-suffered feelings concerning the Cardinal front office be known. Bill Bidwill's incessant penny-pinching will prove costly for the Big Red.

PATRICK K. O'SHEA
St. Louis

MORE ON THE FOUR-CORNERS

Sir

Don Delinquanti said that North Carolina Coach Dean Smith denied the four corners offense 15 years ago (*They're Foursquare for the Four-Corners*, Feb. 6).

I am a 1956 graduate of Beloit (Wis.) College. Dolph Stanley was the Beloit basketball coach at that time, and he used a four-corners offense that we referred to as "Dolph's open-court offense." In the late 40s he brought Beloit to the NIT. Stanley is also well known in Illinois for having coached some five or six different high school teams.



to the state tournament. Although he is 73, he is still coaching at Boylan Central Catholic High School in Rockford, Ill.

"I have on many occasions in recent years watched various college teams employ the four-corners offense, and I can assure you it is the same offense that Dolph devised and used quite regularly during the '50s.

JOHN W. GOSSELIN
Batavia, Ill.

• According to Stanley, the four-corners offense is "as old as the hills." He says, "I first saw it run by a fellow named (King) Arthur Trout in 1921. Trout was the coach at Centralia (Ill.) High School and I was a player at Marion High. I went to him and asked him to explain it to me, and I've been using it since 1930"—ED.

Sir:

Why not a 60-second shot clock for college basketball? My only objection to the four-corners is that if the defense plays it safe, guarding the basket and refusing to foul, the four-corners changes from delay or control tactics to an out-and-out freeze. Sixty seconds would give a team the option of slowing a game down and controlling the tempo by using the four-corners for perhaps 30 or 40 seconds before

working for a good shot. A 60-second clock would also prevent such things as the 12-10 final score in an ACC tournament game shown on regional television a few years back. Such a rule would curb abuses without fundamentally altering the game.

PALL HIGHTOWER
Lexington, Ky.

Sir:

Why all the senseless objection to the good old legitimate game of keep-away in college basketball? It is an art similar to ragging the puck in hockey or some of the lovely moves in soccer. If you're good enough to bring it off, why not?

I was fortunate enough to be in Ann Arbor when Big Ten basketball showed us the likes of John Wooden and Stretch Murphy (Purdue), Branch McCracken (Indiana), Bud Foster (Wisconsin) and Benne Osborne (Iowa)—all of whom went on to great things. Their game was basketball, a trifle rugged but no silly quick whistles for moving into the basket and many more blocking fouls than charging fouls. I saw John Wooden win a game in Ann Arbor one night by dribbling the ball expertly for some three or four minutes until the Michigan home crowd

applauded. This is what Dr. Narasmith intended. The scores were ridiculously low by modern standards: Purdue and Wooden "murdered" Michigan 56-33. Earlier, Wooden and his dribbling expertise almost singlehandedly killed the Wolverines 23-19. And once again, in 1931, Wooden's stall locked UM 30-21.

It may sound dull, but it was anything but.
WEST HILLERY
Evanston, Ill.

Sir:

It's about time someone explained this type of offense. As a graduate and supporter of the University of North Carolina, I have grown tired of hearing the four-corners knocked. Many schools employ wall tactics, most of which are designed to hold the ball and not produce points.

The picture illustrating the four-corners, however, had one glaring mistake. How could author Don DeLuca and illustrator Wali Spetzmler show a player with the number 18 on his jersey? They should know that no digit above five is used in numbering the jerseys of college basketball players.

A. P. JAMES
Durham, N.C.

• Right: The long-standing rule limiting un-

commented

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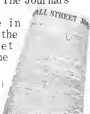
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form numbers to two digits with no single digit exceeding the number five was instituted to enable a referee to signal a player's number with no more than two motions of one hand. Players are not permitted to wear the number one or two because the officials use those digits to indicate the number of foul shots to be taken. This rule is observed only in the breach in the pros—for example, good old No. 17, John Haylock.—ED

PREPARING SOCCER STARS

Sir:

Regarding the item in SCORECARD (Feb. 6) condemning the drafting of high school soccer players by the NASL, it is obvious that your knowledge of the soccer scene in this country matches your coverage: skimpy but growing. Further investigation into the motives of pro soccer's interest in high school players would reveal that college soccer does not adequately prepare a player for the pro ranks. Colleges play too few games (on the average fewer than 20 a year) and the level of play is below that of many amateur leagues. As a result, the aspiring pro spends four years in limbo when he could be receiving top coaching and playing against top competition in the pros. Playing on a professional reserve

team is better training than playing for most college teams.

Our national team, with players who have only four or five years' experience, will not be able to compete successfully against teams from other countries whose players have twice that much experience. Nor can the NASL continue to rely on foreign imports while waiting for colleges to raise the status of soccer. Pelé, Beckenbauer and Cruyff began their careers in their teens. Had they waited until their early 20s, as our players do, they would not be the players they are today.

No one seems to mind that athletes in other sports play at the international level without first competing at the college level. If this were a requirement, we wouldn't have Steve Nunn and Tracy Austin. I am not belittling the importance of a college education, but if one wants to become a doctor, one doesn't go to a trade school. Nor does a mechanic go to Harvard. If a player wants a pro career, he owes it to himself to go where he can get the best training. It is also possible to have a college education and a pro career. Many NASL contracts offered to high school players include just such a provision.

JAMES L. COGAR
Idaho Falls, Idaho

ONE FOR MATCH PLAY

Sir:

In his article on the \$105,000 Colgate Triple Crown Match Play women's golf tournament (*Playing Like an Amateur*, Feb. 6) Walter Bingham states unequivocally that match play "is not nearly as fair a test as medal play." This is a dubious contention.

Successful match play requires day-to-day and hole-to-hole consistency, whereas in medal play one superb day can negate two poor ones. In other words, match play emphasizes consistency and, consequently, may reward a different (i.e., more conservative) approach to the game than medal play. It is not an inferior test, only a different one.

Additionally, match play affords ample opportunity for thrilling head-to-head competition. In contrast, medal-play tournaments often conclude with the contenders playing against a leader who is already in the clubhouse or, even worse, against the leader board.

JAMES G. PATTERSON
Pittsburgh

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